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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes the experiences of 27 states selected to participate in Carnegie Corporation of New York's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI), a 3-year grant program to states to stimulate fundamental reform in schools serving 10- to 15-year old students. MGSSPI states are working to radically transform the education provided in middle grade schools--middle, intermediate, and junior high schools. Common standards shared by all states' projects include enhancing local school capacity for reform; implementing systematic, statewide reform; and addressing the needs of at-risk youth. Following the introduction, chapter 1 reviews program recommendations. Chapter 2 discusses the similarities among state programs at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. The third chapter describes typical initiatives of MGSSPI projects in 6 areas. The program's major accomplishments are described in chapter 4: bringing attention to the state level; creating informed, unified advocacy; building state and local reform; and sustaining reforms despite austerity. Insights and challenges are presented in the final chapter--they concern ways to conserve time and energy; make progress; foster connections; and develop professional skills. The epilogue describes 15 state programs that were awarded continuation grants. Nine figures are included. Appendices contain information on MGSSPI technical assistance and oversight activities; state projects, goals, and objectives; and project directors. (LMI)

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States in Action

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Council of Chief State School Officers

TURNING POINTS
States in Action

An Interim Report
of The Middle Grade School State Policy
Initiative

Resource Center on Educational Equity

Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide non-profit organization of the 57 public officials who head departments of public education in the 50 states, five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools. It has functioned as an independent national council since 1927 and has maintained a Washington office since 1948. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. Through its structure of committees and task forces, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents each state's chief education administrator, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity and high quality education for minorities, women and girls, and for the disabled, limited English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to assure education success for all children and youth, especially those placed at risk of school failure.

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Foreword

This report analyzes the experience of 27 states selected to participate in Carnegie Corporation of New York's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI), a three-year program of grants to states to stimulate fundamental reform in schools serving 10- to 15-year old-students. MGSSPI states are working to transform the education provided in middle grade schools—middle, intermediate, and junior high schools—to reflect recommendations contained in *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, a report of the Carnegie Corporation's Council on Adolescent Development released in June 1989.

MGSSPI states' projects are planned efforts at radical reform. They reflect the vision, knowledge, analytical skills, and great determination of hundreds of dedicated professionals across the United States in and out of state government to advance a new agenda for young adolescents. As it should be, no two states have taken the same approach. Each state's project is a creative response to existing conditions in schools and political circumstances in the state.

Common standards, however, guide all states' projects. First, each project seeks to promote changes in state policies that enhance the capacity of local schools to initiate and sustain fundamental reform. Much has been said about the relative merits of "top-down" versus "bottom-up" approaches to reform. MGSSPI states are attempting to merge these approaches within a single, unified strategy.

Second, each state's effort is targeted toward systematic, statewide reform. Problems in middle level education are not confined to individual communities or specific groups of students or educators. MGSSPI states are seeking to promote developmentally appropriate education for all young adolescents in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Finally, each state project is designed to especially address the needs of educationally disadvantaged youth living in the most at-risk communities. States realize that reforming educational systems for all young adolescents does not imply a single approach or strategy. Rather, in every community, especially in communities ravaged by poverty, discrimination, and neglect, greater targeting of effort may be necessary to achieve success for all.

The nature, scope, and accomplishments of states' efforts reported in this interim report vary considerably. Nonetheless, the quality of these projects overall, the commitment of project staff, and the results achieved thus far are impressive. Moreover, through structured meetings and informal contact initiated by project staff, states have begun to assist each other in implementing middle level policy reforms. The further development of a network of states actively engaged in broad-scale, middle grade restructuring will be an important step in sustaining and expanding reforms in the years ahead.

The Council of Chief State School Officers has provided valuable technical assistance to states since the inception of the initiative. As Director of the MGSSPI for Carnegie Corporation, it has been my pleasure to work with Cynthia Brown, Burton Taylor, and Leslie Talbot, and more recently Maria Garza-Lubeck, Gayle Davis, and Ellen Cohen who have skillfully managed the Council's complex support role. The Council's professionalism is clearly evident in this report. More so than any previous report, *Turning Points: States in Action* accurately captures the "state of the states" in pursuing middle grade reform.

Anthony W. Jackson
Carnegie Corporation of New York

Acknowledgments

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has identified the improvement of middle level education as an ongoing concern since 1989, when it began an investigation on higher order thinking in the middle grades. The Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI) is a natural extension of the focus on adolescent development and optimum educational opportunities. During the first phase of the MGSSPI, described in this interim report, staff members included Cynthia Brown, Project Director; Burton Taylor, Project Manager; Leslie Talbot, Project Associate; and Reaksia Banks, Project Secretary. Taylor and Talbot have since left CCSSO. As principal staff members, they made lasting contributions to the MGSSPI. Gordon Ambach, CCSSO's Executive Director, provides the project ongoing support and counsel.

We extend special thanks to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for establishing a partnership with the Council in supporting state leadership to improve middle grade education. Carnegie's vision of young adolescents and their schools is extraordinary, and its commitment to these students is exemplary. The encouragement and assistance of Anthony Jackson, MGSSPI Program Officer of the Carnegie Corporation, is invaluable and much appreciated.

The MGSSPI project directors, who are identified at the end of this report, are commended for their dedication to the education of young adolescents and for their high degree of professionalism.

Writing and producing this report was a cooperative effort. MGSSPI Project Manager Maria Garza-Lubeck supervised the entire writing and production process and authored portions of this report. Cynthia Brown provided overall direction and assisted in the report's conceptualization and design. Pamela Dronka, educational consultant and writer, was the primary author. We appreciate her considerable synthesis and writing talents. Paula Delo, Director of Public Information at CCSSO, coordinated the editing, design, and production of this report. Project Assistant Ellen Cohen developed Appendix B and, together with Project Associate Gayle

Davis, provided ongoing feedback and support throughout the development of this report.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and to the New Mexico MGSSPI project, especially Co-Director Don Kelly, for the photographs that lend life to the text. In giving us a glimpse of their lives in and out of school, the students and faculty at Los Lunas Middle School in Los Lunas, New Mexico; the preservice students in the University of New Mexico's (Albuquerque) Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Multicultural Education; and the photographer Herbert Lee have enhanced this report immensely.

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent those of the Carnegie Corporation.

Preface

The middle school is a powerful institution in the life and promise of adolescents. In its seminal document, *Turning Points*, the Carnegie Corporation identified the middle school as the last best chance of recapturing at-risk youth and issued recommendations for middle school reform. Our understanding of adolescents in general, and disadvantaged, urban youth in particular, convinces us that the middle school can effectively help them become productive, self-actualizing adults. Building states' capacity to help schools realize this vision is the goal of the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI).

Recently, over one-half of the states in America received unprecedented financial support from the Carnegie Corporation to undertake middle grade reform on a massive scale. A primary distinction between the middle school reform movement, which is decades old and supported by a fine research base, and the MGSSPI is that the *state's role is key, visionary, and facilitative*. The importance of state leadership in middle grade reform is beyond dispute.

Education, like life, is a *journey*, not a destination. In 1990, 27 MGSSPI states embarked on a *Turning Points* journey toward improved education for all young adolescents. To facilitate systemic reform at the local level, the MGSSPI states had to change their own behavior as well. As a result, MGSSPI projects are beginning to practice, and thus model, the kinds of behavior that characterize the ideal for middle school education: a heightened sense of teamwork and community, collective problem solving, expertise in middle grade education, and a commitment to equity and accountability.

One important caveat must be emphasized: the MGSSPI is a "success story in progress." We have been purposely forthright in describing the MGSSPI achievements and its setbacks. This glimpse into the little-known operations of state education agencies will provide the reader with a deeper appreciation of the complexity of systemic reform and the hard work and determination of the state commissioners and their staffs.

The MGSSPI experience of the past few years convinces us that real middle school change is on the horizon. The Council of Chief State School Officers has a great sense of pride in the MGSSPI and is privileged to be a part of this effort. Fundamentally, the MGSSPI breathes life into the *Turning Points* recommendations and, in doing so, moves America one step closer to achieving the promise of adolescence.

Introduction

■

Turning Points—And Beyond

Most schools attended by young adolescents are strikingly out of phase with their students' developmental, social, and academic needs.

In June of 1989, a slim but potent document, *Turning Points*, frankly acknowledged a glaring problem: most young adolescents' schools are strikingly out of phase with the developmental, social, and academic needs of these students. *Turning Points* culminated two years of research and deliberation by the Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, an initiative of the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Council on Adolescent Development. Specifically, *Turning Points* concluded:

> Middle grade schools—junior high, intermediate, and middle schools—are potentially society's most powerful force to recapture millions of youth adrift. Yet all too often these schools exacerbate the problems of young adolescents. A volatile mismatch exists between the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools and the intellectual and emotional needs of young adolescents.

In his foreword, David Hamburg, the Council's chair and Carnegie's president, depicted the traditional middle grades as "an arena of casualties—damaging to both students and teachers." Yet schools can, in fact, be much more responsive to the developmental needs of students at this age. Figure 1 describes key characteristics of young adolescents and characteristics of good middle schools.

Insofar as most middle schools are not centered on adolescent needs precisely at a time when they are "far more at risk for self-destructive behaviors," Hamburg concluded that the time has come for fundamental changes in middle grade schools.

The task force, chaired by former Maryland Superintendent of Schools David Hornbeck and composed of members from education, research, government, health, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations, did more than just sound alarms.

The task force began to investigate what exact changes were necessary to bring middle grade programs into correct alignment with the needs of young adolescents. The task force commissioned papers and interviewed experts, including practitioners:

Figure 1

■

Characteristics of Young Adolescents and Good Middle Schools

Characteristics of Middle School-Age Children:

- They have a high level of emotional and physical energy, combined with long periods of "hanging out" and doing nothing productive by adult standards.
- They indulge in risk-taking behavior yet have their feelings easily hurt.
- They want to be more independent from families; at the same time, they need to be nurtured and protected.
- They are self-absorbed and crave privacy, together with having great concern about being accepted by the group.
- They may demand privileges but avoid responsibility; at the same time they are developing a deep concern about social issues and other people.

Characteristics of Good Middle Schools:

- Each student has a teacher-advisor.
- Scheduling is flexible.
- Teachers with different specialties plan and teach together.
- Children learn in groups.
- Parental involvement is emphasized.
- All students have the same basic course of study.
- Discipline is handled in the classroom.
- Students of differing ability and achievements levels learn together.
- Large buildings are divided into smaller units of 400-600 students.
- Teachers and administrators have background and experience in middle-level education.
- Students have opportunities for community service.
- Special programs are available for students with limited English ability.
- Students and parents are involved in decision making.
- The school building is safe for all.
- Staff and students enjoy being at the school.

Source: Berla, N., Henderson, A.T., and Kerewsky, W. (1989). *The middle school years: A parent's handbook*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

teachers, principals, health professionals, and leaders of youth-serving community organizations.

From all this research and deliberation came a series of eight recommendations that call for new and distinct school structures, instructional practices, and school-family-community relationships. This constellation of practices, which collectively make up the middle school concept, would benefit all students in the middle grades, the task force concluded; but those most at risk of being left behind would benefit the most.

Turning Points Recommendations

The specific recommendations of *Turning Points* were these:

- **Create small communities for learning,** where stable, close, and mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth. The key elements of these communities are schools within schools or "houses," students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small-group advisories that ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult.
- **Teach a core academic program** that results in students who are literate, including in the sciences, and who know how to think critically, lead a healthy life, behave ethically, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society. Youth service to promote values for citizenship is an essential part of the core academic program.
- **Ensure success for all students** through elimination of tracking by achievement level and promotion of cooperative learning, flexibility in arranging instructional time, and adequate resources (time, space, equipment, and materials) for teachers.
- **Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences of middle grade students** through creative control by teachers over the instructional program. This control is linked to greater responsibilities for students' performance, governance committees that assist the principal in designing and coordinating schoolwide programs, and autonomy and leadership with subschools or houses to create environments tailored to enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all youth.
- **Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents** and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades.
- **Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents** by providing a health coordinator in every middle grade school, access to health care and counseling services, and a health-promoting school environment.
- **Reengage families in the education of young adolescents** by giving families meaningful roles in school governance, communicating with families about the school program and students' progress, and

offering families opportunities to support the learning process at home and at school.

- **Connect schools with communities,** which together share responsibility for each middle grade student's progress, through identifying service opportunities in the community, establishing partnerships and collaborations to ensure students' access to health and social services, and using community resources to enrich the instructional program and opportunities for constructive after-school activities.

The Pivotal Role of States

Turning Points emphasizes that states have the leadership role in middle school reform: "Increasingly, our nation has turned to state governments to lead the effort to change America's schools." If *Turning Points*' eight recommendations are to be transformed into eight realities, state leaders must be at the forefront of **systemic** changes in education.

In an insightful article published in *The Politics of Curriculum and Testing, 1991*[1], Marshall Smith and Jennifer O'Day explain more fully why states must play such an active role if systemic school reform is to succeed.

Only states have the means, motive, and mission to lead crucial areas of reform.

Smith and O'Day reason that a second wave of school change began to build in the middle to late 1980s. Unlike the first wave of reform, the second didn't just intensify past practices (calling for **longer** school days, **more** requirements for graduation, **better** teachers), but actually sought to change the substance of the educational enterprise. Second-wave reformers were confident that decentralized decision making and the professionalization of practitioners would release powerful forces for change at the local level.

Smith and O'Day agree with that line of thinking, but they caution that unless some state-level entity coordinates and generalizes local improvements, reforms will have a fragmented, short-term, "project mentality" character. Like so many points of light, the authors assert, improvements will "blink on and off," leaving the present unsatisfactory system essentially intact.

"If we wish to influence more than a few schools or districts at a time," Smith and O'Day contend, "the state is a critical actor." They point out that only states have the means, motive, and mission to lead in some crucial areas of reform:

> During the past 20 years, most states have gradually amassed greater authority and responsibility over their educational systems as their share of the educational budget has risen, as the economy and productivity of the state have been seen to be more and more dependent on its educational system, and as issues of equity and fairness in the distribution of resources and services among districts became an important part of the nation's agenda . . . .
>
> [Further,] the states are in a unique position to provide a coherent leadership, resources, and support to the reform efforts in the

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[1] Smith, M.S., and O'Day, J., (1991). Systemic school reform. In S. Fuhrman and B. Malen (eds.), *The politics of curriculum and testing* (pp. 233-267). Bristol, PA: Falmer Press.

> schools. States not only have the constitutional responsibility, but they are the only level of the system that can influence all parts of the K-12 system: the curriculum and curriculum materials, teacher training and licensure, assessment and accountability.

Consequently, Smith and O'Day favor "a coherent, systemic strategy." A systemic strategy would combine "the vitality and creativity of bottom-up change with an enabling and supportive structure at more centralized levels of the system."

In such a change process, states would not lead by fiat. *Turning Points* succinctly outlines states' most promising points of leverage:

> States can be most constructive by building consensus in and strengthening the capacity of local communities to transform schools. . . .
>
> States can marshal resources to develop incentives for school districts to transform their middle grade schools and to remove obstacles standing in the way of reform. . . .
>
> States can also encourage collaboration at the local level among schools, health and social service agencies, and youth-serving organizations.

In short, in a new, more constructive balance of power, state leadership ventures down, and local leadership wells up—and both cooperate to bring about long-term reforms, not short-term experiments. States exercise leadership by building consensus and the capacities of local leaders, by channeling resources in and routing obstacles out, and by nurturing and facilitating changes, not by designating or demanding them.

The Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative

To help states fulfill their leadership role in carrying out the eight *Turning Points* recommendations, the Carnegie Corporation conceived and launched a three-year state grant program, the Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (hereafter referred to as MGSSPI or the project.)

Early in 1990, the Corporation issued an invitation to the mayor of the District of Columbia and the governors of all states, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The invitation asked states to propose projects that would bring about "far-reaching changes in school organization and management, curriculum, classroom practices, student grouping, and teacher education and certification." Also considered especially valuable were initiatives "linking middle grade education to critical resources outside the school."

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By the March 30th deadline, 45 applicants had submitted proposals. Corporation staff members and outside reviewers selected 27 states to receive $60,000 grants, the Corporation's board of directors ratified the decisions, and the MGSSPI awards were announced late in June 1990.

The states that received funding were Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

States were to match their Carnegie grants and use the total $120,000 to support projects for 15 months. At that time, if they chose, states could compete for two-year continuation grants of up to $200,000.

How CCSSO Serves the Project

At the outset of the project, the Carnegie Corporation realized that state grantees faced an enormous challenge. To give state projects the best chance to succeed, the Corporation engaged the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to provide technical assistance and oversight to the project (for details, see Appendix A).

The MGSSPI involves two of CCSSO's continuing concerns, the improvement of middle level education and systemic school change.

The selection of the Council to fulfill these functions was particularly apt, since the MGSSPI involves two of CCSSO's continuing concerns, the improvement of middle level education and systemic school change.

As early as 1989, the Council had initiated a special focus on early adolescent learning. With funding from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Council (1) reviewed current research in middle grade education; (2) identified state initiatives to promote higher order learning in grades 6, 7, and 8; (3) designed a survey to collect information about the progress of such efforts and to assess what states would need to fully achieve the successful teaching of higher order thinking in the middle grades; and (4) published the results in a 1990 report, *Higher Order Learning for All*. To provide additional guidance to state and local efforts, the Council subsequently produced *Principles to Support Higher Order Learning in the Middle Grades* (1992).

The Council's commitment to the concept of systemic school reforms was clear in the July 1991 statement of CCSSO Executive Director Gordon Ambach. In his testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Budget Committee, Ambach made two recommendations. One of them urged action on a proposed national education goals bill, America 21:

> America 21 features a major federal initiative and commitment of resources focused on more comprehensive restructuring, or systemic change of schools, to bring up the quality in all of them. . . . To achieve the goals of 90 percent graduation with substantial improvement in academic achievement, particularly in math and science, we must have a comprehensive, integrated strategy to create high performance schools for all students.

CCSSO's first MGSSPI technical assistance activity, a conference series on policy development, was entirely consistent with the Council's support for such systemic-change approaches. In particular, the comments of James Smith from the California State Department of Education helped MGSSPI staff develop comprehensive, integrated strategies in their projects. Smith stressed, "The project that brought you here will not be as effective as it could be if it is not part of an overall strategic plan, and it is not likely to have a lasting effect unless you connect it to your overall strategic plan for improving not only middle grades, but for improving schools in your states."

Smith's advice on strategies to effect middle level reforms included the following assumptions:

- People do the best job that they know how. If they knew a better way, they would do it. It follows that state agencies ought to be in the business of building capacity.
- The state education agency must view itself as an active, important player in systemwide change and must believe that its mission is both possible and right.
- Schools generally, and middle schools in particular, can be reformed by following a very simple model. The model is a viable alternative to regulatory control, which in any case is only marginally effective at bringing about high quality education programs.

Smith's reform model has three steps:

1. **Understand—really understand—the changes to be brought about; then communicate the vision for change to the people who have to implement it.** The new ideas must be expressed in enough detail to make it clear how they differ from current practice, but must not be so elaborated as to be prescriptive.

   In California, Smith said, the state education agency worked with the leadership in each discipline to define the best possible content and instructional practice in the various curricular areas. The resulting curriculum frameworks describe high-quality programs, but are not prescriptive in terms of lessons. Thus the frameworks are not particularly useful to classroom teachers, but are useful for selecting textbooks, developing district curriculum, and devising state tests.

2. **Hold people accountable for results.** What people are held accountable for has to be consistent with the vision for new practices, Smith emphasized. This standard may seem simple, but is often violated; he said, "We talk about achievement, and then we reward bureaucratic compliance." A classic case of talking out of both sides of our mouths, Smith added, is asking for higher order thinking and then measuring results with tests of basic skills.

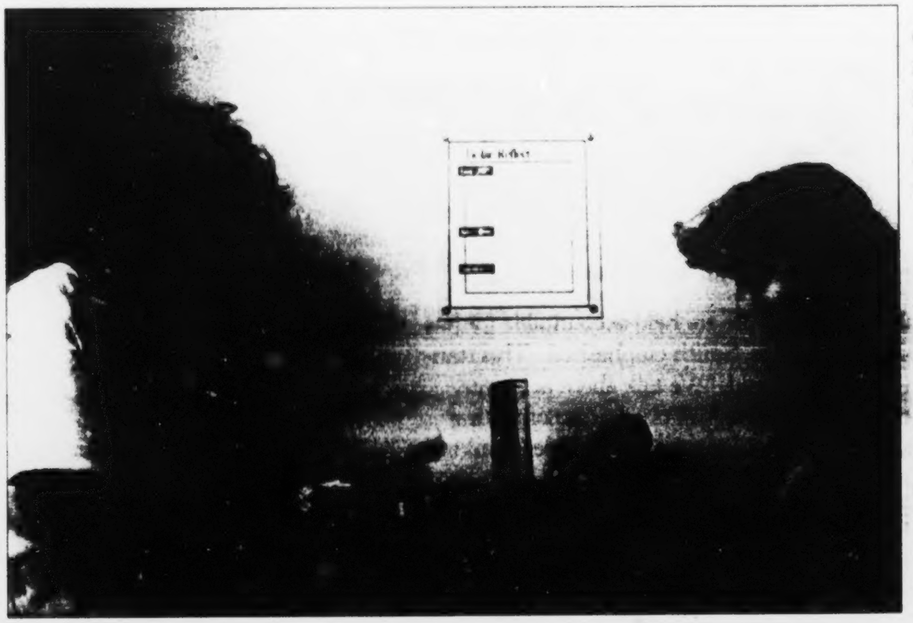
   Once vision and assessment of results are aligned, though, "there need to be consequences for success and failure," Smith said, adding that failure, even chronic failure, is not a sufficient consequence for most schools. Many schools, he said, have been failing for years. They know or have a pretty good idea that they are failing. As long as no one does anything about it, schools are not sufficiently motivated to make any changes.

   Smith called the California state superintendent "a bit of an activist" on accountability. Every year, Smith said, when the California Assessment Program (CAP) scores come out, the state superintendent calls the superintendents in the districts with the 30 worst-performing schools. He asks, "Do you realize that you have one of the worst schools in the state? What do you suppose is going on in that school?" Those questions actually have an effect, Smith reported. Typically, the following year, the 30 worst-performing schools have different principals.

The most powerful and absolutely essential form of assistance is professional development.

3. **Provide assistance to help produce the desired results.** To Smith's way of thinking, "the most powerful and absolutely essential form of assistance is professional development." Moreover, he stressed, achieving substantial change in teacher behavior in the classroom requires more than short-term training: "You can't just put on a road show and do a three-day workshop with teachers and expect them to change their behavior. The minimum investment is a four- to six-week summer institute plus follow-up during the next two or three years." That cost, Smith admitted, is in the neighborhood of $4,000 per teacher, which is expensive, but not a waste of money, as are staff development activities that cost less but do not produce real change.

California's Subject Matter Projects exemplify Smith's protracted professional development. The projects bring teachers together for about six-week periods in the summer. Teachers do basically the same things they expect students to do. For instance, in the literature project, teachers read difficult works, analyze them, write about them, and discuss them. Throughout the next year, teachers meet periodically with their colleagues from other schools to discuss progress.



The Contribution of State Grantees

The balance of this document is drawn primarily from grantee state reports submitted at the end of the first phase of the project. In some cases, the reports were augmented by conversations with project staff in the various states.

This interim report is a collection of middle grade reform ideas, actions, and resulting caveats. It describes what states tried, what they accomplished, and what they found out in the process. Appendix A describes CCSSO's technical assistance role; Appendix B lists the states' accomplishments; Appendix C shows the goals and objectives developed by each state; and Appendix D lists project directors for each state.

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Chapter 1

Reflections and Recommendations

> Young adolescents have a great need for intimacy, yet we put them in large, impersonal schools. Young adolescents need increased autonomy and they need to make their own decisions, yet we put them in environments of review and rote learning. Young adolescents show great variability among themselves, yet we put them in classrooms where we ignore their variability and their need for flexibility.
>
> *Turning Points*
> Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1989

The MGSSPI seeks to unite the supportive, enabling power of states with the vitality and creativity of local innovators.

In short, the influential *Turning Points* report concluded that the middle grades too often "virtually guarantee that the intellectual and emotional needs of youth will go unmet."

The story does not stall there, however. The publication of the report was a prelude to action. The beginning of the action is the subject of this monograph.

The year 1989 was a time ripe for sophisticated school reform activities. Having worked through reports and change efforts in education during the 1980s, school reformers came to two conclusions.

One was that the **identification of problems in education was not tantamount to a solution to those problems. A second was that concerted and sustained efforts by people in many roles and on many levels were essential for successful change.**

In the first wave of reform, various change agents had leveled charges, advanced reform ideas, and implemented plans for reforms. Here and there, ground was gained; but in the main, improvements were episodic, scattered, and small. The core problems in education stubbornly persisted.

As the school reform movement matured, however, it became evident that reform itself had a flaw: disunity. Change agents who were isolated from one another were unlikely to be successful at bringing about durable, generalized, and potent school reforms. Changing the education system requires a system of well-conceived, concentrated, and consensual actions.

Out of this realization came the Carnegie Corporation's Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative (MGSSPI), a $2 million grant program to promote the restructuring of schools so that the middle grades become better attuned to the developmental needs of young adolescents. The MGSSPI grants, which were awarded to state agencies (usually the state education agency), sought to unite the supportive, enabling power of states with the vitality and creativity of local innovators.

The Corporation invited states to propose projects that would effect far-reaching changes in areas like middle school organization and management, curriculum, teacher education, and the linkage of schools to other youth-serving organizations.

Of the 45 proposals received, 27 were funded; and state projects began the first phase of the grant program, which ran for 15 months, from June 1990 to September 1991. (At that time, states could reapply for funds to carry on their projects for two additional years; 26 states did so, and 15 were re-funded.)

First Phase Initiatives

During the first phase of the MGSSPI, states undertook initiatives from among one or more of six general categories. Projects attempted to:

- **Build awareness** among educators, other youth-serving professionals, and the public about the kind of schools young adolescents need and the kind of schools they actually have.
- **Assess current practices** in individual states against the ideals expressed in *Turning Points*.
- **Network** people and organizations concerned with the development of young adolescents.
- **Develop policy** to guide and sustain middle school restructuring.
- **Develop professional skills** that middle level educators need to restructure their schools.
- **Establish model schools and disseminate information about them** to demonstrate the middle school concept in practice and to aid other schools in their transformation to fully developed middle schools.

Turning Points: States in Action synthesizes the collective experiences, major accomplishments, and challenges faced by the 27 state projects during the first phase of the MGSSPI. Data for this synthesis are derived from written project reports and state project directors' formal and informal communication with Council staff. The MGSSPI projects reveal a remarkable depth and range of new planning and implementation initiatives. To reach the MGSSPI goal of improving middle grade education, educators and policymakers should carefully consider the following 13 recommendations to correct the "volatile mismatch between the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools and the intellectual and emotional needs of young adolescents" (*Turning Points*, 1989).

MGSSPI Recommendations

1. Continue vigorous attempts to improve middle level education.

Although middle school concepts are not new, practice is far from the concepts. Local implementation of programs and practices like those recommended in *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century* is uneven and inconsistent.

State reports reveal that until recently, little state level attention was paid to middle school improvement. Clearly, much remains to be done to transform middle grade schools, but it is heartening to note that once the challenge was put before leaders in different states, they acted.

The MGSSPI projects and reports show great acceptance of the middle school concept and eager cooperation for improvements. As the **Delaware** project director noted,

> The grant project was a wonderful opportunity. It gave us the resources we needed to pull things together and really be able to get some push behind what was just hanging out there.

2. Enlist both key decision makers and local innovators in reform goals and strategies.

Real school changes resemble railroad cars coupled together: nothing moves unless everything moves.

In one respect, school changes resemble railroad cars coupled together: nothing moves unless everything moves. Ten years of national school reform have demonstrated, as the **Texas** report says, that real, positive change "requires a combined effort from all levels of the education community."

Key decision makers are certainly vital. The **New York** report was not alone in its position that "a necessary ingredient for reform is support from upper level, policy-making staff." Several reports point out how the governor's interest—or lack of it—could aid or scuttle project initiatives. Several other reports note the success of broadly representative state policy councils in removing barriers to collaborative efforts between educational and noneducational agencies.

Two distinct state agency approaches seemed to be successful at enlisting and exciting local innovators.

First, local professionals were included in study and planning efforts. In **North Dakota,** for example, "Study group members in each of 12 communities became experts on middle level education and made recommendations for restructuring their communities' middle grades." Was it a coincidence that "in virtually every community in which a local study group was at work, a commitment to restructure the education of young adolescents was being formed?"

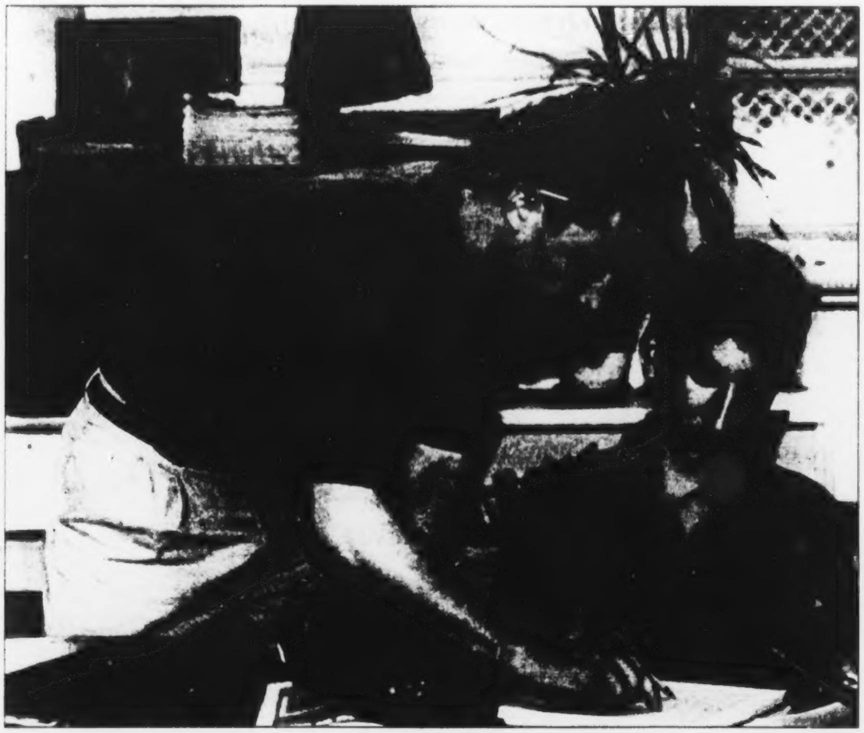
In **Illinois,** focus groups had a similar effect. They provided information to state level planners, spread information about the topic and project, and enlisted many stakeholders in the process of change.

The **Maryland** project used a second helpful approach. As model schools were selected, the project took time to pique the interest of educators at several, increasingly decentralized levels. State department personnel met with local education agency personnel to identify possible demonstration schools and clarify roles and responsibilities they would have. The project was then presented to principals and school staffs, who made the decision whether or not to participate. Expectancies for all players (schools, local education agencies, and the state education agency) were carefully established and documented.

Once the schools began to plan for restructuring, the Maryland report continues,

> One of the significant issues encountered in the project was the need to devote time and staff development to develop and refine the roles and relationships between and among the principals, school improvement teams, and the central office and state personnel involved at each project middle school. . . . Roles regarding instructional and school-based decisionmaking need to be defined and understood by all collaborators in the project. First, the principals need to feel comfortable in allowing staff to make decisions. Second, staff need to develop the skills of functioning in this process. Third, central office and state personnel need to assume a supportive and facilitative role with the school.

The reports contain clear guidance about enlisting leaders, however. The first is that any policymakers who assume key project positions should be firmly committed to the project. In one state, where the prominent chair of the state task force never attended its meetings, the work of the task force was not completed.



Second, project structures and activities must accommodate multiple demands on leaders' time. In one state, for instance, the three chiefs of state education, health, and social service agencies co-chaired the state task force. This approach, says the project report, "virtually assured that at least one of them would have a scheduling conflict at any one time." Decisions were therefore held up, and project activities were often delayed.

3. *Expect and provide for disruptions in leadership and institutionalize leadership succession plans.*

The state reports show that turnover in leadership positions is likely and influential in terms of project outcomes. Indeed, any substantive, long-term, and highly complex reform initiative should

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anticipate leadership turnover and its impact on project goals and momentum. **Alaska,** for example, found the project's attempt to influence state policy thwarted—but not defeated—by the lengthy vacancy in the state commissioner's role and the election of a new governor.

The latter frustration may have been inevitable, given the circumstances. Projects in other states show, however, that initiatives have an increased chance to succeed if (1) goals are set early and expressed clearly and convincingly, (2) projects build a groundswell of public support, and (3) project goals are incorporated into the agendas of new decision makers (or, as one project director put it, "I try to load what I'm moving on their wagon.")

4. Projects should have a full-time director—and support staff familiar with the project.

Several states emphasize the importance of a full-time project director. The **Delaware** report, for instance, remarks that a full-time project coordinator gave continuity and direction to the project and provided a direct contact person for all participants.

In the absence of such a person, another state's project experienced frequent delays. Indeed, since the project comprised only about one-fourth of the project director's duties, the administration of the grant itself was the chief obstacle that challenged the project.

Because the project directorship turned over in several states within 15 months (and sometimes more than once), it was necessary to have more than one person familiar with the project.

Incorporate project goals into the agendas of new decision makers so that you "load what you want moved on their wagons."

5. Be realistic about what can be accomplished in a short time with available resources.

Some goals (notably assessment and interagency collaboration) ultimately required much more time and effort than was originally anticipated. Simply recognizing the amount of time and effort such activities take can lead to more realistic timelines.

Prior planning and development help avoid delays, the **New York** project report says. Its successful activities had been well thought out in advance. However, "we underestimated the planning and development required to successfully implement several new innovations we included in the project proposal."

6. Delineate project goals clearly—but don't expect the process to be easy.

When aspects of the project have murky goals, the result can be confusion, delay, or worse—nothing.

"Successfully completed activities," **New York's** report reflects, "had undergone extensive preplanning and development even prior to the submission of the project proposal." Later, the document notes, "Unsuccessful activities were not viewed the same by each of the participating agencies—there was a lack of common understanding of what the activity was to be."

The experiences of other states seem to bear out New York's observation. Task force members in **Illinois,** for instance, spent an "arduous" three days wrangling over every word and thought in their plan, but concluded that the resultant clarity of purpose and intent justified the sacrifice.

The **Vermont** task force also went through a lengthy revision process. Its mission statement for middle level efforts in the state was redrafted several times as parallel work on the conceptual frameworks proceeded and as feedback came in from individuals outside the task force (each of the 27 task force members was responsible for contacting 3 people to solicit their input on the mission statement draft).

7. Frame goals that are complementary but independent.

At times, interdependence of goals may be inevitable. Sound planning, for instance, cannot be done until assessments are completed.

Whenever possible, though, it is desirable to frame goals so that the individual initiatives that make up a project complement and strengthen each other without being dependent on each other.

Frame goals so that individual initiatives complement and strengthen each other without being dependent on each other.

The **California** videotape series is one such system. The project is producing five videotapes, as follows:

- **Caught in the Middle—Reform Through Partnerships**
- **Instructional Strategies—Gateways to a "Thinking Curriculum"**
- **Advisory Programs—Key to Positive Personal and Academic Values**
- **At-Risk Students and Equal Access to the Most Valued Curricula**
- **The Master Schedule—Fundamental Expression of Reform Commitments**

Any of these videotapes could stand alone, though of course they will have added value as a complete set.

Similarly, the three locuses of the **North Dakota** project (a workshop series, local study groups, and the task force's planning effort) had interactive features, but were not interdependent.

8. Work through established, committed groups to maximize resources.

Networks

Several state projects worked with networks, with excellent results.

The **Alaska** MGSSPI carried out staff development activities in its coalition schools through the existing Alaska Staff Development Network.

The **Rhode Island** MGSSPI stimulated the founding of a statewide network, RIMLE (Rhode Island Middle Level Educators), which, among other achievements, has crafted new middle level education policy guidelines and secured broad support for them by seeking endorsement from many other groups.

The **Connecticut** MGSSPI established contacts with several formal networks of middle grade schools, learned how the networks operated, and then helped schools to network in areas of the state where such mutually beneficial ties had not previously existed.

Professional Associations

Several projects worked closely with professional associations, most often for the joint sponsorship of professional development activities.

For instance, an evening conference on improving the middle grades from within was hosted by the state education agency and the **Vermont** MGSSPI, but cosponsored by "virtually every major organization" in the state concerned with middle level education.

The **Georgia** and **Kentucky** projects both held conferences in conjunction with Middle School Association conferences. The **Colorado** project worked with the Colorado Association of Middle Level Educators (CAMLE), along with two universities and community organizations, to sponsor various workshops for middle level educators, school board members, students, parents, and community members.

Universities

Collaboration with universities has been productive as well.

The **Alaska** project staff, for instance, worked with the instructional television staff and faculty at the University of Alaska-Anchorage to design a series of four, three-hour interactive television programs on success strategies for at-risk youth.

The **North Dakota** project's workshop series was apparently the first course to be sponsored jointly by three institutions of higher education, all using a common syllabus and shared faculty.

University consultants were helpful in many states as well. In **Illinois,** a professor at Southern Illinois University helped task force members learn to conduct focus groups. University consultants were vital, too, in school-university partnerships, like those in **Massachusetts** and **Arkansas.**

Other Reform Initiatives

Finally, state projects linked up with other reform initiatives. The **Mississippi** project worked with the Community Development Coalition project to solve community problems in targeted counties. The **California** project became a feature of reforms guided by the California Middle Grade Reform Model. The **Virginia** project, which held a week-long workshop to develop a middle level curriculum guide and supported the meetings of a middle level education advisory committee, was one component of the broader, ongoing Virginia Middle School Restructuring Initiative.

State reports suggest two cautionary notes, however. When projects work with other institutions, they should:

- Take care not to blend goals, structures, and resources so intimately that the project loses its individuality.
- Work only through stable and philosophically compatible organizations.

The **North Carolina** centers were to organize regional planning committees. When the regional centers were reduced in number and changed in focus, the activity of the regional planning committees ceased.

South Carolina tried to build a network of improving middle schools through Target 2000 pilot projects, but the results were disappointing because there was no conceptual affinity between the projects, according to the project director. He explained further that the Target 2000 programs were crisis oriented and remediative dropout-prevention efforts and therefore "quite divergent in content and philosophy" from the middle school concept as it is expressed in *Turning Points* and espoused by South Carolina's new state superintendent.

9. Use or adapt resources already developed elsewhere.

At least three state projects used or adapted assessment instruments developed in other states. Because assessment activities typically take more time than anticipated, it makes good sense to make good use of what already exists.

The **Alaska** project staff seized a golden opportunity to create distance-learning inservice opportunities after the U.S. Department of Education funded a Star Schools proposal, which enabled 83 school sites to purchase satellite dishes. About 50 other schools have bought dishes with their own funds; thus, many schools are equipped to receive staff development information delivered by interactive television.

10. Use in-state expertise.

The **Connecticut** project modified itself when in-state expertise was discovered. The report explains:

> It was originally planned that major expenditures would be made for outside consultants for . . . the development of assessment instruments, informing the Task Force, and facilitating the establishment of networks of schools. However, it was found that each of the purposes could be accomplished with expertise that existed within state agencies or with assistance from experts who gladly donated their time to this project.

Just one state to the north, **Vermont,** made the same discovery. A university professor—and a state task force member—conducted 14 after school and inservice sessions on middle grade reforms; and most of the sessions were completely cost-free.

11. Build in a capacity to scale down.

Several state reports indicate that, in deference to the budget or the clock, some activity had to go. **California** is producing five videotapes, not six as originally planned (some of the content of the sixth videotape is being incorporated into other scripts). **Mississippi** dropped a survey of students, and **Rhode Island** jettisoned plans for full-time coordinators at their four demonstration sites.

12. Seek complementary funding.

The **Indiana** project was unusual in that the state task force got a $15,000 grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. to secure nationally recognized speakers and to support on-site visits to schools, conferences, symposia, professional development centers, and CCSSO events.

Complementary funding for projects seems to be more the exception than the rule. Several state project directors said that their state education agencies do not have any formal grant-seeking capacity. Considering the demands for school reform even as budgets are trimmed, state education agencies might be well advised to develop their capacity to secure grant funds.

So much of collaboration depends on people, not organizations.

13. Anticipate the challenges inherent in interagency collaboration and take steps to meet those challenges.

Collaboration among state agencies on behalf of young adolescents is a new and developing phenomenon—and probably the most rigorous challenge for the MGSSPI projects.

Effective collaboration requires ample time to develop trust and effective working relationships. It is crucial to recognize that personal relationships are important. As **Illinois'** project director said, "So much depends on people, rather than organizations."

State agencies are generally understaffed and may lack the outreach personnel needed to understand what other agencies do and what procedures they use. **South Carolina** met this challenge by having each agency study itself to determine what the agency could do for young adolescents. Then the agencies began to plan jointly.

Several directors indicated that a full-time, middle school advocate in the state education agency is also essential to the coordination of activities.

The MGSSPI experience has found that collaborative groups may not be sure what they are supposed to do. It is therefore essential to plan middle grade reforms before groups begin collaboration. Goals should be very specific and exact so that all agencies involved are clear about what each is to contribute to the project and what the policy implications will be for each agency.

Responsibility for activities may be diffused—spread out among several leaders in different agencies and among various people within individual agencies. It may not be clear who is responsible for an activity or who deserves credit for accomplishing it.

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To counteract this, it is helpful to choose one leader and make one agency the prime mover in the project. Whenever possible, responsibility for a particular activity should be part of the reasonable job specifications of one or two people within a single agency.

Yet another challenge inherent in collaboration efforts is that agencies all have different policy agendas; and activities viewed as important by one may not be viewed as important by others. A joint plan should help all involved agencies reach their top-priority goals.

The preceding reflections and recommendations constitute lessons learned from original, ambitious, and large-scale state experiments in middle school reform. The following chapters describe the contexts, experiences, and insights that ultimately resulted in the significant accomplishments of the MGSSPI states.

Chapter 2

■

Common Threads Among State Projects

Ingenuity is an article of faith in America and it is hardly surprising that states launching MGSSPI projects took different approaches to the improvement of middle grade education. (See Appendix B, "MGSSPI State Products," for an annotated list of state products.)

Projects varied dramatically in scope. Some states pursued several sweeping goals. Illinois, for example, set out to assess and report the state's middle level practices as compared with those described in *Turning Points*; raise awareness through focus groups, publications, and presentations; develop a state plan for middle level reforms; and incorporate the principles from *Turning Points* into other state reform initiatives.

Other states chose more circumscribed goals. For example, because **California** had been active in middle school reform for several years before the MGSSPI effort, the project concentrated solely on producing a series of videotapes to describe the experiences of its network of restructuring schools.

The points of emphasis in state projects varied markedly as well. Some sought to elevate public and professional awareness; some concentrated on strengthening networks of professionals; and some concentrated on building faculties' capacity to change their schools.

Finally, states were distinct in the ways they divided the work of the projects. Some formed task forces, but others did not. Some task forces took on only part of the project, while others carried out almost all of it. In some states, the state education agency played the central role; elsewhere, most of the action was outside the state education agency.

Nonetheless, there are striking similarities in what states attempted and accomplished.

MGSSPI states took different approaches to the improvement of middle grade education. Nonetheless, their attempts and accomplishments were strikingly similar.

Similar Views, Different Starting Points

States took similar views toward *Turning Points*, though projects began from different starting points. *Turning Points* was not controversial. That so few states were well along toward the kind of middle level programs depicted in the report can be attributed more to inattention at the state level than to disagreement with the concept. After the release of *Turning Points* and the Carnegie grant awards, interest in middle level education became much keener at the state level.

If most states began with *Turning Points*, they had different starting points. Some states already had middle school reform movements under way. Some did not. Some had highly developed middle school systems. Some did not. States differed markedly on the variables shown in Figure 2.

Beginner Level

In several states where there was little awareness or implementation of the middle school concept, the MGSSPI catalyzed middle level reform. For example, **South Carolina's** Project Director declared, "We were nowhere. We had no policy. We had hardly even thought about middle schools."

In several states where there was little awareness of the middle school concept, the MGSSPI catalyzed middle level reform.

Similarly, **North Dakota** only had junior high schools, operating on the secondary model. The state had previously had two middle schools, but one had burned down and the other had closed. No staff in the state education agency was dedicated strictly to middle schools.

Isolation was a problem, too, especially in large states like **Alaska.** "Prior to the inception of the project, there was no opportunity for middle level educators to communicate with each other," the Alaska report says. Furthermore, it continues, "Alaskan middle level educators had been totally ignored by the Alaska Department of Education as well as the state's colleges and universities and professional associations."

The absence of communication, evidently, was not willful. Some 38 percent of schools with middle grades chose to participate in Alaska's coalition of restructuring schools, even though only about 5 percent of the state's 473 schools are dedicated strictly to the middle grades.

Before the MGSSPI, **Rhode Island** had never had a forum for discussing middle level education at the state level. The state education agency, for instance, recognized only elementary and secondary tiers in the education system. Though teachers could be endorsed for the middle grades, specific certification was unavailable, nor were there any specialized middle school teacher preparation programs. Middle level educators had an active network, but "there was no known advocacy around a middle level agenda in Rhode Island prior to the Carnegie Project," the state's report said.

Likewise, in **New Jersey,** "state policy makers" had "given little attention to the quality or character of education in the middle grades," which "is where achievement falls and alienation sets in." Instead, the state had focused its reform efforts on high schools and systemwide changes and had "virtually neglected the possibilities for reform in the middle grades."

Figure 2

■

Checklist on the Current Status of Middle Schools

In this state:

___ We know the status of middle-level education vis-a-vis the eight recommendations in *Turning Points*.

___ Policy guidelines support the middle-level concept.

___ The education system is three-tiered, that is, there are elementary, middle, and high school levels (as opposed to a two-tiered system, which only includes elementary and secondary emphases).

___ State-level officials have a keen, informed, and determined interest in middle-school improvement.

___ The state provides adequate resources and incentives and in all other necessary respects works to strengthen the local community's capacity to improve its middle schools.

___ Educators clearly understand the middle-level concept; they are fully aware of the developmental characteristics of young adolescents and the kind of schooling that is compatible with those traits.

___ Educators share a vision of how to move toward optimal middle-level schools.

___ The state education agency has staff to coordinate middle-level practices and programs.

___ In-state colleges and universities offer programs to prepare middle-level educators.

___ There is licensure or endorsement for middle-level teachers.

___ There are some acknowledged authorities in the field of middle-level education.

___ There are some first-rate models of middle-level schools.

___ The middle-school concept is widely and evenly applied in the middle grades.

___ Staff development assists educators in implementing ideal middle-level practices.

___ Middle-level educators have well-established avenues for communication with one another.

___ Groups providing services to 10-to 15-year-olds are united; they collaborate to support the development of young adolescents.

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, as compiled from MGSSPI 1991 State Final Reports.

Intermediate Level

Some states showed an intermediate level of middle school emphasis. These states had implemented some middle school reforms, but were still far from full-fledged middle schools.

Louisiana, for example, had adopted a limited form of middle level certification, one that went into effect for incoming freshmen in 1989. Louisiana also had a few exemplary middle schools and a fast-growing National Middle School Association affiliate with close ties to the state department of education. Across the state, however, the implementation of the middle level concept was uneven.

North Carolina had a number of middle schools, some nationally known experts in the field, one middle school coordinator in the state education agency, and certification of educators at the middle grade level. The state level, however, lacked any emphasis on middle school improvement.

In **Washington,** state funding supported a number of middle grades initiatives, but the state education agency had no one to coordinate or support middle level programs and practices. A pilot, middle level teacher preparation program, offered through the Puget Sound Professional Development Center, was the only such program in the state.

Some states had implemented a number of middle school reforms, but were still far from full-fledged middle schools.

At public hearings held during the MGSSPI in **Texas,** task force members discovered that middle schools were "in every phase of the process of restructuring." According to the project staff, "Individual middle schools had received national recognition, and an active state middle school association existed. At the state policy level, however, middle schools had been ignored," losing out to two other priorities, early childhood education and high school graduation requirements.

A **New Mexico** project co-director said that the state began the MGSSPI with some superb middle schools, but also many pseudo-middle schools "with `middle school' chiseled in the stone" that were actually "running a junior high or mini-high school." New Mexico offered no middle school licensure or endorsement, nor (until recently) were universities offering specialized, middle level, teacher training programs. Also, until recently, there was no full-time, middle level consultant in the state education agency.

Indiana had many schools that referred to themselves as middle schools and had initiated some structural changes like flexible scheduling and teaming. In the main, however, schools continued "to function in the traditional mini-high school mode. Students sit in rows and listen to teachers lecture. Tracking is entrenched, and community involvement is nonexistent. Large numbers of students are academically disenfranchised, and attempts at reform have been superficial." The state had no A+ (i.e., exemplary) middle school, no state-led impetus for reform, some policies that impeded implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations, and no accepted policy or shared vision for middle schools.

Advanced Level

Several states were notably farther along in implementing the middle school concept, particularly certain aspects of it.

For instance, **Connecticut** began the MGSSPI with some highly advanced middle schools and a well-developed informal network of more and less advanced middle level schools.

The middle grade network in **Colorado** was similarly well established. The project coordinator noted that the middle school concept in Colorado is 18 years old, and the Colorado Association of Middle Level Educators is 17 years old. In this context, the Carnegie grant enabled the state to facilitate the great momentum that was already present.

According to **Delaware's** project director, the state had oscillated between middle schools and junior high schools during the 1960s and 1970s. By the mid-1980s, however, middle level education had become one of the state's 17 focus areas, an assessment of middle schools had been completed, and educators had reached agreement on where the state needed to go.

California had also completed many preliminary middle grade initiatives. In 1987, the California Middle Grade Task Force released its report, *Caught in the Middle*, a state agenda for middle level education reform. Its constellation of more than 100 recommendations, which came to be called the California Middle Grade Reform Model, assumed that optimal reform would result from collaboration among schools. Consequently, the state organized 10 regional networks of 115 schools. All are striving to become state-of-the-art middle schools and "catalysts for early adolescent education reform throughout the state."

The middle school movement was highly developed in **New York,** as well. The state had developed a middle grade policy statement and had a middle grade focus in the state education agency. The real struggle for New York, said the MGSSPI project director, was the difficult task of involving other players (like health and social service agencies) in middle level education.

Another sophisticated reform movement was underway in Maryland. Before the MGSSPI, **Maryland** had convened a middle level task force that worked concurrently with the panel that produced *Turning Points* (indeed, David Hornbeck, the chair of the task force that produced *Turning Points*, had formerly served as Maryland's superintendent of schools). At the inception of the MGSSPI, Maryland also had middle level and high school specialists at the state level and personnel at the district level who were assigned middle school responsibilities. Despite these advantages, the state still lacks middle level licensure or endorsement.

Several states were notably farther along in implementing the middle school concept, particularly certain aspects of it.

Goal Setting

Typically, states pursued some constellation of the following goals:

- Establish organizational structures (such as task forces) and processes (like measures to enlist all stakeholders).
- Raise public and professional awareness about *Turning Points* and parallel state reports.
- Assess how well current state practices fulfill the ideals portrayed in *Turning Points.*
- Prepare state plans.

- Formulate new policies and secure endorsement for them.
- Network stakeholders in middle level education, including educators, youth-serving agencies, teacher educators, legislative and executive officials, members of professional associations, business leaders, and parents.
- Undertake the professional development initiatives (workshops, publications, and so on) necessary to transform schools to full implementation of the middle school concept.
- Begin restructuring in demonstration schools.
- Disseminate effective strategies and tactics for restructuring.

The aims of the individual state projects are shown in Appendix C. They are listed alphabetically. Usually, the projects' aims were referred to as goals, but occasionally as purposes, activities, or outcomes. Objectives were specified in most cases.

In some states, the MGSSPI goals evolved. **Washington** started out with two relatively modest goals, but added two others. **New York's** task force essentially dropped 4 of the state's 10 proposed activities, reasoning that if they were achieved, the results would soon become outdated. Instead, the task force planned to roll the spirit of the four activities into its long-range plan.

Maryland's MGSSPI goals evolved in two stages (see Figure 3).By the end of the first 15 months in the Maryland project, teams in four demonstration schools had completed their school improvement plans. The school improvement action team used these plans to project goals and delineate five outcomes for the continuation phase of the initiative.

An interesting feature of the second set of goals is their implicit commitment to comprehensive school improvement. Objectives are specified on three levels: what the state will do to achieve the stated outcome, what the school systems will do, and what the schools will do. The objectives focus on specific areas of concern, such as "at-risk" students; yet they are broad enough to allow individual schools and districts to develop their own "comprehensive service-delivery models."

Task forces made up of broadly representative groups customarily operated at a policy level and tended to meet infrequently en masse.

Organizing Task Forces for Planning and Policy Development

Usually, the project's charge was vested in a task force, though the missions of such groups varied considerably. In some states (e.g., **Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico**), the group was the primary change agent, directing almost all aspects of the project. In other places (like **Connecticut** and **Vermont**), the task force carried out only one or more components of the project.

Broadly Representative Groups

Most task forces had one of two common configurations: broadly representative groups and those involving practitioners. In the first configuration, the task force included high-ranking officials from K-12 education, health services, social services, juvenile justice, state legislative and executive branches, businesses, universities, professional organizations, and community organizations. These large groups customarily operated at a policy level and tended to meet infrequently en masse. Aides might

Figure 3

Example of a State's Evolving Goals (Maryland)

Initial Goal

Develop and document a process for restructuring to improve education for early adolescents.

Objectives

- In four restructuring middle schools in different districts, carry out a multilevel ownership process to enable central office personnel, building administrators, and teachers to gain a stakeholder's commitment to the project.
- Establish new structures to facilitate project operations and communications: school improvement planning teams in each school; technical assistance teams from the state education agency (SEA) that provide resources and technical assistance to schools; an SEA action team composed of all technical assistance teams plus other SEA resource personnel; and a school improvement council, a high-level interagency policy group.
- Form new partnerships between the four demonstration schools and multiagency services in each of the surrounding communities.

Subsequent Goals (For Project's Final Two Years)

- At state, local, and school levels, institute structures, policies, and planning procedures that improve the performance of early adolescents and their schools.
- Implement comprehensive service-delivery models for at-risk early adolescents and their families.
- Collaboratively develop and implement programs that are appropriate to early adolescents, using information-management systems (including technology) for curriculum, instruction, and school improvement.
- Provide interventions for at-risk students that improve their achievement and involvement.
- Develop and implement professional-development process models that are appropriate for middle grades, school-based change.

Source: Maryland's 1991 Final Report.

be designated to carry out everyday functions, or the task force might divide into working subcommittees, perhaps coordinated by a steering committee.

The **New Mexico** Middle Level Education Task Force, which later became an advisory committee appointed by the state board of education, proposed sweeping middle level policy changes. These changes were subsequently endorsed by the state board of education and led to the production of the document Moving Into Action.

In **Arkansas,** for example, the Arkansas Middle Grade Policy and Practice Task Force drew its members from education, health services, and human services, in addition to businesses, the legislature, and other outside agencies. The task force built awareness through a statewide informational meeting, established 10 demonstration schools allied with universities, and developed a plan for statewide collaboration among education, health, and human service agencies.

Arkansas's task force originally divided into seven subcommittees for communications, policy and legislation, proposal development, proposal review, research and evaluation, partnership development, and action plan. Committee chairs made up a steering committee.

The subcommittees carried out specific functions. For instance, the research and evaluation subcommittee worked with University of Arkansas faculty to develop a survey for superintendents and middle school principals. The proposal review committee chose 10 demonstration schools from the 28 applications received. The partnership development committee (1) compiled and distributed a listing of exemplary collaborative programs involving communities, businesses, and schools and (2) suggested guidelines for establishing public-private partnership councils.

At the end of the first phase of the MGSSPI, a new subcommittee structure was proposed. It included groups for communications and public relations, policy and legislation, development, research and evaluation, partnership development, assessment, middle level teacher preparation, and curriculum and instruction.

The **Connecticut** task force included educators and professionals from health and social services. Their goal: assess the status of middle level education in the state, determine the needs of educators in implementating *Turning Points* recommendations, analyze the usefulness of state resources, and recommend appropriate changes. Subcommittees were formed to concentrate on the following areas: assessing and restructuring schools, preparation and professional development, middle grade curricula, connecting schools with parents and communities, and coordinating health and social services.

The broadly representative **North Dakota** task force produced policy recommendations (see Figure 4, page 28), two reports, and other publications. The task force formed subcommittees for curriculum and instruction, school personnel, administration and finance, students at risk, and parents and communities.

To see the similarities and singularities of types of subcommittees for the three preceding states, see Figure 5, page 29.

Groups Involving Practitioners in Education

In a second, less common configuration, task forces were predominantly practicing educators who met often to carry out project functions. The task force reported to, or was accompanied by, a broadly representative advisory group, which met less frequently.

Illinois chose this approach. An apparently tireless task force of educators was scheduled to meet six times, but actually met nine and opted to continue meeting through the implementation phase of the project. With the state education agency's Research and Evaluation office, the task force crafted the Middle Grade Practices Survey, which was sent in December 1990 to administrators in all Illinois schools with grades 5-8.

During that same month, the task force was also engaged in a qualitative research methodology: 50 focus groups were held in eight sessions in four locations around the state. In the groups, 600 people concerned with early adolescents discussed the needs of these young people and what schools, families, and communities should do to meet them. Results were summarized, and the task force members identified the commonalities and emergent themes in the summaries.

In February 1991, the task force huddled for three days to hammer out a strategic plan that expressed a vision for middle level education, declared action statements, and set forth activities for policy and program development. The three days were "arduous," says the Illinois report, because "members wrangled over every word or thought." The meeting was nonetheless deemed valuable, because members "persevered until a vision and plan took shape," one that reflected consensus and clarified purpose and intent.

The result was the planning document, *Right in the Middle: A Report of the Illinois Middle Grades Planning Initiative on Early Adolescent Public Education*. In April, the task force submitted its report to the advisory board, a group of presidents or executive directors of major state organizations and departments that met twice to "review the recommendations of the task force and set policy." In May the report went before the Planning and Policy Committee of the state board of education. Late in June, the full board adopted the plan.

North Carolina used a similar strategy. Educators already serving on the superintendent's Middle Grades Task Force analyzed the status of middle grade education in the state and used MGSSPI funds to complete and disseminate their report, *Last Best Chance*. The 22-member North Carolina Middle Grades Advocacy Council, a broadly representative group, studied this report, learned about activities of its represented groups, and considered advocacy roles for the future. The Advocacy Council, project personnel concluded, was "particularly successful in bringing together a strong group of organizations that frequently have adversarial roles over policy and power," even though participation by the medical community was, at times, minimal.

The groups represented were the governor's office, the governor's youth council, the state Child Advocacy Institute, Lions/Quest, Cities in Schools, state health and social service departments, the North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools, the Center for Early Adolescence, the University of North Carolina, the PTA, the

A second, less common task force configuration was predominantly made up of practicing educators who met often to carry out project functions.

Figure 4

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North Dakota's Seven Policy Recommendations

The North Dakota Task Force on Young Adolescents recommends that:

1. Middle schools be identified through state structure and regulation as a separate, distinct, and desirable level of schooling.
2. Guidelines for school accreditation and higher education program approval for teacher preparation recognize and require appropriate middle-level preparation and staff development.
3. State curriculum regulations that focus on disciplinary approaches be modified to support interdisciplinary learning with assessment of holistic outcomes for middle-grade students.
4. Statewide attention to promoting a vision of developmentally appropriate education for young adolescents be continued with strong support for building coalitions among various groups.
5. Incentive funding be provided for schools making a transition to more appropriate schemes for young adolescents.
6. Models and incentives be made available for providing coordinated delivery of services for young adolescents who are at risk.
7. Parents and other adults be reengaged in the education of young adolescents.

Source: North Dakota's 1991 Final Report.

Public School Forum of North Carolina, the North Carolina Association of Administrators, the North Carolina Association of Educators, and the Junior League.

Several states, for a variety of reasons, did not establish a separate task force.

Like California and North Carolina, **Maryland** had convened a task force that produced a report prior to the Carnegie grant project. The state was ready to help its four demonstration schools restructure according to the middle school concept and document how it was done.

Thus, the state education agency created four groups:

- A School Improvement Council, which was a policy body composed of state department of education assistant superintendents, their designees, and representatives from the Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families. This council was charged with identifying needs, coordinating the work of different state agencies, and

Figure 5

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Three States' Task Force Subcommittees

Connecticut	North Dakota	Arkansas 1	Arkansas 2
Assessing and restructuring schools	School personnel	Research and evaluation	Research and evaluation
Preparation and professional development	Curriculum and instruction	Partnership development	Assessment
Middle-grade curriculum	Parents and communities	Policy and legislation	Middle-level teacher preparation
Connecting schools with parents and communities	Students at risk	Proposal development	Curriculum and instruction
Coordinating health and social services	Administration and finance	Proposal review	Partnership development
		Action Plan	Policy and legislation
		Communications	Development
			Communications and public relations

Source: Compiled from 1991 State Final Reports.

Note: Arkansas reconfigured its subcommittees at the end of the first 15 months of the project, hence its two phases of subcommittees.

removing barriers that schools might have in executing the goals of the project.

- Four Technical Assistance Teams (TATs), composed of state department of education personnel who facilitated the project at the state's four demonstration schools, helped marshal needed resources, and provided technical assistance.
- A School Improvement Action Team (SIAT) composed of state department technical assistance teams, resource personnel both within and outside the state department, and local education agency

liaisons to demonstration schools, mobilizes its members to provide any technical resources that school improvement teams might need.

- School Improvement Teams (SITs) (representatives from school staffs and local communities, along with the state TAT and local education agency central office liaison) conducted most of the work of the project. These school-based teams conducted an extensive self-assessment process and produced plans to improve the culture, climate, and performance of their schools.

Sometimes task forces were not needed because the state education agency worked through other types of structures to carry out all or part of project activities.

South Carolina, for one, attempted to "build a foundation for policy development" through the Education Improvement Act (EIA) Select Committee, a joint legislative body overseeing education reform expenditures.

Alaska trained educators to restructure schools by using the nine-year-old Alaska Staff Development Network, a partnership that includes the state's 54 school districts, five colleges and universities, National Education Association of Alaska, the Alaska Council of School Administrators, the state education agency, and professional associations.

In **Rhode Island,** the state education agency helped to found a network of middle level educators; it carried out policy development and professional development activities. The state education agency worked with demonstration schools and produced materials like newsletters and planning documents.

Washington supports school-based restructuring initiatives in four schools affiliated with state professional development centers.

In **Delaware,** state education agency project staff assembled nine state teams representing the state education agency, district administrators and teachers, business and industry, higher education, the governor's office, health and social services, parents, and the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families. Teams were to identify the components of new policies and guidelines pertinent to interdisciplinary instruction, health and wellness, program administration, curriculum, agency/community/home, school climate, and certification and staff development.

The **Mississippi** project worked through the Community Development Coalition, a group previously appointed by the governor to solve community problems. Staff from the agencies participating in the state coalition worked closely with and provided technical support to local coalitions, which were divided into committees for housing, human services, health, education, and economic development. The education committees of the project's five targeted counties prepared plans to meet the needs of at-risk students and to alleviate problems associated with teen pregnancy and substance abuse. By working in these rural, socioeconomically disadvantaged counties, **Mississippi** sought to channel progressive middle school ideas directly into local school districts through parents and teachers.

Chapter 3

■

Typical Initiatives of MGSSPI Projects

In general, MGSSPI activities tried to advance middle level education in six areas:

- **Awareness** of middle grade students' developmental characteristics and educational practices that are compatible with them.
- **Assessment** of current school practices and programs.
- **Networking** of people and organizations concerned with young adolescents.
- **Policy development** to gain commitment to the middle school concept and the transformation to true middle schools.
- **Professional development.**
- **Model schools** to demonstrate the transformation to and practices of fully developed middle schools.

The myriad of MGSSPI activities helped advance middle level education in the areas of awareness, assessment, networking, policy and professional development, and model schools.

Raising Awareness

The participants in state projects attempted to raise awareness in two basic ways. They developed all sorts of informational materials (see Appendix B), and they orchestrated numerous meetings for public and professional discourse.

A Policy Summit Luncheon in **Mississippi** promoted awareness at the state level by bringing the *Turning Points* recommendations to the attention of agencies, including education, health, human services, and institutions of higher education. Whereas the state's parent fairs promoted awareness at the local level, the Policy Summit Luncheon focused on raising awareness at the level of state institutions. In doing so, **Mississippi** hoped to increase the likelihood of both bottom-up and top-down support for the developmental needs of young adolescents.

North Dakota established study groups of educators in 12 communities with higher-than-average concentrations of at-risk students. After a day-long orientation conference the groups met every other week over a seven-month period to become experts on middle level education and make recommendations for restructuring their local middle grades. As a result, "in virtually every community in which a local study group was at work, a commitment to restructure the education of young adolescents was formed." Seven local boards voted to make the transition to middle schools, three boards agreed to implement as many recommendations as feasible, and two sites that had middle schools became rededicated to their founding principles.

Indiana held eight regional public forums to inform communities about the work of the task force and present its recommendations in light of the issues and problems presented in *Turning Points*.

Education committees in the five targeted counties in **Mississippi** arranged Saturday morning parent fairs that focused on middle school philosophy and practices, the developmental characteristics of adolescents, and community resources to support children and families. About 375 people attended the fairs.

In September 1990, **Vermont's** governor and the Association for Middle Level Education hosted the state's first-ever conference for 160 parents of middle level students. The project report calls the event "a huge success."

In virtually every community in which a local study group was at work, a commitment to restructure the education of young adolescents was formed.

The **Texas** task force conducted seven regional public hearings throughout the state. The meetings accomplished dual purposes, according to the Texas report. They acted as "a forum for increasing representation and input into the policy process" and "gave task force members an opportunity to learn firsthand about programs throughout the state."

To increase awareness of *Turning Points* recommendations and gather public opinion on the needs of early adolescents, **Kentucky** held 15 regional meetings for people from schools (including parents and students), central offices, state and local boards of education, state legislatures, local health departments, comprehensive care centers, social service agencies, colleges and universities, court workers and judges, chambers of commerce, and county and city executive offices. The sessions, which received substantial radio and newspaper coverage, drew 425 people, who expressed many common concerns and offered concrete suggestions for transforming services.

The **Illinois** focus groups, described in a previous section on task forces, drew together about 600 superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, legislators, community and business leaders, professionals serving youth, college deans and professors, and association members.

A campaign orchestrated to raise awareness was the main thrust of the **North Carolina** MGSSPI. The Carnegie grant funds financed the completion, publication, and statewide distribution of *Last Best Chance*, a state report on middle schools that had previously been compiled by the superintendent's Middle Grade Task Force. The report or an executive summary of it was:

- Distributed to more than 10,000 people, including 2,000 public schools, 16 universities, 54 schools of education at private colleges, health and social services departments in 100 counties, central offices of school systems, and 770 local school board members.
- Discussed on a TI-IN television program relayed by satellite; videotapes of the program were made available to teachers through eight regional education centers.

- Featured in *Education Report*, a state education agency newspaper distributed monthly to all teachers in the state, and in *Advocate*, the newsletter of the North Carolina League of Middle Level Schools.
- Presented to thousands of educators at more than a dozen professional meetings.
- Explained in presentation packets that include transparencies, speeches, and public service announcements.

The outcome of this ambitious consciousness raising, the state report says, is that "educational organizations are very aware of the report and have shown widespread support for its recommendations. Health and social services departments and youth serving agencies are beginning to acknowledge the report." At the state level, however, "mental health groups, private health care providers, medical associations, and the business community are only minimally aware of the report," and awareness "is low with the general public and community organizations."

Georgia's entire project was predicated on public dialogue, actually a series of five dialogues. At the five regional meetings, parents and students, along with representatives from education, physical and mental health agencies, the juvenile justice system, recreation, and religious groups, heard a presentation on *Turning Points*, jointly identified young adolescents' needs, and heard a presentation on exemplary interagency programs. The needs identified in three of the five dialogues are shown in Figure 6.

Conducting Assessments

Self-Assessments

Most of the MGSSPI assessment activities compared the individual states' middle level education system with the ideal middle schools portrayed in *Turning Points*. Two state projects concentrated on exceptionally thorough assessments. The **South Carolina** assessment had three components. In the first "and most substantial," the state report declares, 40 teams from middle schools around the state held four conferences (1) to determine the current practice of and commitment to adopt 145 principles drawn from *Turning Points*, and (2) to specify priorities for school and state organizations. A synthesis of the results is shown in Figure 7.

In a second, unusual set of assessment activities, four different self-assessment conferences were held for people who work with early adolescents: teachers; parents; health and human services personnel; and representatives of private, nonprofit organizations. The conferences explored the issues most relevant to each of the four groups.

In the third assessment component, task forces created in health and human services agencies began to define their current services, identify the problems of early adolescents, and set priorities for service enhancement. "This work has slipped far behind schedule," the state report laments, "because half the reports written by the agencies are unacceptable and because the Human Services Coordinating Council [which is made up of chief executives of independent state agencies] has taken no leadership in the MGSSPI project."

Figure 6

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Problems Identified in Georgia's Regional Dialogues

Needs from the 95 participants at Valdosta:

Counselors in all schools
Trust-building activities to strengthen services from agencies
Networking all services within the community
Transportation to available services
Additional funds
Classes on parenting skills
Nurses in all schools

Significant issues from the 60 participants at Milledgeville:

Teen pregnancy
Lack of high-quality adult role models
Lack of communication with parents
Duplication of services
Limited community and business support, inadequate transportation to services
Alcohol abuse by students
Limited parental involvement
Need for school social workers
Lack of coordination among agencies
Lack of communication among all segments of the community
Inappropriate tracking of students
Peer pressure for unhealthy choices
Need for school clinics with multiple services

Significant issues from the 49 participants at Gainesville:

Inadequate health care and nutrition
Inadequate teacher training
Inappropriate tracking of students
Limited business and community support
Students who do not fit program criteria
Lack of collaboration among service agencies
Lack of parental involvement
Inequitable distribution of services
Duplication of services
Limited access to transportation
Poor communication with parents
Limited school nurses
Lack of parenting skills
No measure of confidentiality
Limited information sharing among professionals

Source: Georgia's 1991 Final Report.

Figure 7

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Findings from South Carolina's Middle School Teams' Self-Assessment Conferences in 1991

	Current Practice	Commitment To Adopt
1. Creating a Community for Learning	2.5	4.0
A. Creating smaller learning environments.	2.5	3.8
B. Forming teachers and students into teams.	1.9	3.8
C. Assigning an adult advisor to each student.	1.6	3.7
2. Teaching a Core of Common Knowledge	2.0	3.7
A. Teaching young adolescents to think critically.	1.8	3.8
B. Teaching young adolescents to develop healthful lifestyles	2.4	3.7
C. Teaching young adolescents to be active citizens.	1.7	3.5
D. Integrating subject matter across disciplines.	1.1	3.4
E. Teaching students to learn as well as to test successfully	1.8	3.3
3. Ensuring Success for all Students	2.0	4.0
A. Grouping students for learning.	2.1	3.6
B. Scheduling classroom periods to maximize learning.	2.1	3.4
C. Expanding the structure of opportunity for learning.	1.7	3.0
4. Empowering Teachers and Administrators	1.9	3.4
A. Giving teachers greater influence in the classroom.	1.6	3.5
B. Establishing building governance committees.	1.9	3.5
C. Designating leaders for the teaching process.		
5. Preparing Teachers for the Middle Grades	2.3	3.4
A. Developing expert teachers of young adolescents.	2.1	3.4
B. Selection of teachers qualified to practice in . middle schools	1.5	3.1
C. Middle Grades Certification.	0.7	3.3
6. Improving Academic Performance Through Better Health and Fitness	2.5	3.8
A. Ensuring student access to health services.	2.5	3.8
B. Establishing the schools as a health promoting environment.	2.4	3.6
7. Reengaging Families in the Education of Young Adolescents	2.4	3.8
A. Offering parents meaningful roles in school.	2.2	3.2
B. Keeping parents informed.	2.7	3.9
C. Offering families opportunities to support the school.	2.1	3.7
D. Parents, grandparents, and other adults can also play useful roles in daily school life.	1.5	3.4
8. Connecting Schools with Communities	1.4	3.3
A. Placing students in youth service in the community.	1.3	3.0
B. Ensuring student access to health and social services.	1.9	3.7
C. Supporting the middle grade education program.	1.8	3.6
D. Augmenting resources for teachers and students.	2.0	3.8
E. Expanding career guidance for students.	1.7	3.7

Source: South Carolina's 1991 Final Report.

On a scale of 0-4

The assessment effort in **Kentucky** was remarkable in its breadth. The task force steering committee surveyed principals; teachers; parents; students; health, mental health, and social service agencies; universities and colleges; juvenile court intake officers and judges; and people in the business community.

Two states inquired about state practices vis-a-vis *Turning Points* recommendations, but added one other dimension. The **Connecticut** *Middle Grade School Survey*, a joint effort of the project task force, the state education agency, and local districts staffs, asked all middle level principals about both the present status of the middle level concept and intent to implement facets of it; **Indiana** assessed the implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations, but added questions on barriers to implementation.

During the project, three states also began longitudinal studies that are expected to yield trend data on the transformation to middle schools. **New York** launched a four-year study to check annually on the degree of implementation of recommendations in *Turning Points* and the *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Education and Schools with Middle-Level Grades*. **Colorado** reports that each autumn in 1990, 1991, and 1992, assessment will determine the extent to which quality determinants have been implemented. The quality determinants include the *Turning Points* recommendations. **Massachusetts** reported postponing its assessment of middle level education, but not because the activity was deemed unimportant—rather, the opposite. Apart from the Carnegie project, the state education agency was completing a system that can annually report data on a variety of indicators, including those of interest to professionals restructuring middle schools.

Assessment of middle level education substantiated the belief that most educators are not aware of the distinguishing differences in the middle school concept as compared to the junior high concept.

Most states relied on mailed surveys to assess the status of middle grade education. **Texas** did not. Instead, the project (1) distributed a checklist survey form on school activities and programs in the exhibit area of the Texas Middle School Association annual conference and (2) held a series of seven regional public hearings. Responses from the two sources were found to be consistent.

Overall, states that did assessments and reported their results found ample room for middle school improvement. **South Carolina** found, for instance, that "in general our current practices are not closely aligned with those recommended in *Turning Points*."

When **Utah** assessed its middle level education status, results showed not only a scant implementation of the middle school concept, but a poor understanding of it: "The greatest disappointment" of the assessment effort, the MGSSPI staff report says, "substantiated the belief that most educators who responded are not aware of the distinguishing differences in the middle school concept as compared to the junior high concept." Fewer than a third of the state's district leaders, the assessment found, "are aware of the specific philosophies and objectives of effective middle level education."

Kentucky's surveys of middle school administrators and teachers yielded results similar to Utah's. The results, says the project's staff, "indicate serious deficiencies in the implementation of middle grade philosophy and point to widespread misunderstanding of these concepts throughout Kentucky." Some of the specific findings:

- Less than 40 percent of the schools use team organization.
- Fewer than a third of the teachers share planning time during the school day.

- More than 63 percent of the teachers consider interdisciplinary units "not applicable" to their school programs.
- Only about a third of the schools have advisory programs.

Overall, however, the Kentucky educators were hardly complacent. They expressed strong interest in professional development opportunities. More than three-quarters of the principals requested more training on cooperative learning strategies (79 percent), increasing parent involvement (79 percent), increasing community involvement (77 percent), interdisciplinary teaching teams (76 percent), and teacher-based advisory systems (75 percent). Teachers were most interested in learning more about ways to involve parents and communities (both 74 percent), cooperative learning strategies (73 percent), interdisciplinary team teaching (65 percent), and teacher-based advisory programs (62 percent). Substantial proportions of both teachers and principals also wanted to know more about establishing school-business partnerships and early adolescent development.

Connecticut may be somewhat farther along in middle school development. Results there revealed both strengths and weaknesses. The state's middle schools seemed to be doing well on interdisciplinary team teaching; core academic learning; elimination of tracking; teacher decision making in matters of curriculum, instructional methods and materials, and schoolwide goals; and accessibility of school and community health services. Areas that needed improvement were advisor-advisee programs, flexible class-period scheduling, supervised youth service experiences in the community, and participation of youth-serving community agencies in the education programs of all students.

Other Types of Assessment

Apart from self-assessments against the backdrop of *Turning Points*, state assessments delved into two other areas.

Colorado is developing and piloting an information acquisition process to collect information about symptoms of alienation among at-risk students in schools that have and have not implemented the recommendations in *Turning Points*. The symptoms of alienation to be measured include absenteeism, nonparticipation in school activities, disciplinary referrals, drug or alcohol abuse, low grades and test scores, and negative attitudes toward school.

The **New York** project sought to "develop a preliminary listing of the desired student outcomes and `authentic' assessments for middle level education." The effort stalled, however, because it took the state education agency and its Statewide Network of Middle Level Liaisons a full year to agree on (1) a preliminary list of curriculum objectives from the various syllabi for the middle grades and (2) a definition of "outcomes" and a framework to translate curriculum objectives into outcomes. "Particularly difficult," New York's project report says, "was the establishment of a common vocabulary with mutually agreed upon definitions." Naturally, until outcomes are specified, "authentic" assessments of them are beyond reach.

The **Utah** assessment delayed progress, too. The Utah Middle School Task Force was to divide into subcommittees based on results from the assessment, but it took so long that only one subcommittee had formed by May 1991.

Networking

In many states, a major strand of the MGSSPI had to do with building, strengthening, extending, and using networks.

Frequently, the projects presented an unusual opportunity for networking among individual middle level educators, state agencies, teacher educators, community figures, various school improvement projects, professional associations, all kinds of youth-serving organizations—and even among formal and informal networks themselves.

The activities of the **North Dakota** project, BRIDGES, inherently induced networking. The outline for the project's workshops series, for example, was developed at a state education agency-sponsored meeting of educators from five universities in the state, truly "an unusual opportunity," says the project's staff, "for cooperation and learning among teacher educators at several institutions." The workshops, arranged by teacher centers proximate to the 10 sites, were apparently the first course ever in the state to be offered jointly by three universities using a single syllabus and shared faculty.

Furthermore, the project's three goals (see Appendix C) had interactive features that promoted networking. Interaction between task force members and workshop participants was structured into the final workshop session, and local study group members frequently acted as consultants to state task force subcommittees.

A major strand of the MGSSPI had to do with building, strengthening, extending, and using networks.

The result? "A striking feature of BRIDGES," the project report notes, "was the opportunity it provided for elementary and secondary educators, for teachers and administrators, for school and university educators, and for educators and community people to interact with one another. This was remarked on repeatedly by participants."

In some other states, networking was fomented more directly. A major purpose of the **Connecticut** project, for instance, was facilitating the networking of schools from the state level. State officials began with three important advantages that had sprung from grassroots efforts: some of the most advanced middle schools in the country, a robust informal network of middle level educators, and several formal networks of middle grade schools.

The Connecticut MGSSPI built on these advantages in two ways. First, key players in the informal network of middle level educators were identified and involved in MGSSPI activities. In one such activity, the Connecticut Middle Grades Planning Committee was formed. Its members, who represented urban, suburban, and rural middle grade schools, collected information about their need for assistance in implementing the *Turning Points* recommendations and about willingness to share expertise to meet the challenges of those recommendations.

In a second line of initiative, project staff identified the formal networks of middle grade schools, attended their meetings, gave information to them, and received feedback from them. Project staff members were then able to work with schools in areas that lacked networks, helping them to establish formal networks along the lines of models used elsewhere in the state.

Founding the **Rhode Island** Middle Level Educators Network (RIMLE) became the centerpiece of the state's MGSSPI. The project director reports that RIMLE was proposed at a dull meeting (not associated with the project) in a stuffy room; nonetheless, more than half of the attending administrators and teachers joined then and there; 92 percent of all districts in the state now participate. The network meets monthly to identify professional development needs and funnel policy recommendations from the field to the state level. The network "took on a life of its own," said the project director, and it is "probably the most promising development in this project."

New Jersey, like Rhode Island, created a network, but for different purposes altogether. The FamilyNet program involves seven state agencies (the departments of education, health, human services, higher education, community affairs, labor, and corrections) who all pledged to (1) coordinate policy and the planning and delivery of services and (2) provide staff to work on regional technical assistance teams that help school districts and community organizations improve services to students and their families in the state's 30 special needs districts.

Networks in many states lent varying degrees of assistance to MGSSPI activities. Alaska is undoubtedly the most spectacular case in point. The **Alaska** *Turning Points* Coalition helps educators learn how to restructure their schools through the state's purportedly "excellent" Alaska Staff Development Network, a nine-year-old partnership that includes the state's 54 school districts, five colleges and universities, the state education agency, the National Education Association of Alaska, the Alaska Council of School Administrators, and other professional organizations.

Networking was also an important vehicle for MGSSPI activities regarding other school improvement efforts in the state. The **Illinois** project, for example, established close ties with various other state middle level school improvement projects. Project staff participated in weekly meetings of the Association of Illinois Middle Schools (AIMS), the Accelerated Schools Project (which is administering a federal grant involving demonstration schools), the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools, Chapter 1 services, and the Urban Education Partnership Grants Project.

The report from **Washington** illuminates the value of such ties. At the time the state's middle grade pilot program was being refined, the MGSSPI project director became involved in a new university planning group representing four departments: education, social work, public affairs, and public health.

The interdepartmental planning group was formed to explore ways that would prepare graduates for interagency collaboration in behalf of at-risk youth. The group has had two of its grant proposals funded. A third, if successful, would support interdepartmental curriculum development and enable four MGSSPI demonstration schools to (1) initiate model case-management systems and (2) prepare to serve as practicum sites for students from all four participating departments.

MGSSPI states commonly report that whether networking was considered a pleasant by-product or an end in itself, a lot of networking took place. For instance, **North Carolina's** project director said, "The project provided an opportunity to pull together people from different agencies to look at the issues that we all deal with. It hadn't been done before, and I do not know why."

Colorado held seven regional networking conferences (attended by more than 3,000 people) which focused on "Ensuring Success for All Students." Participants included teachers, administrators, school board members, parents, and community members.

Obviously, there are two other facets of networking: the extensive informal networking that goes on at professional meetings and networks of improving schools. These two aspects of networking are so important that each will be discussed in separate sections later in this chapter.

Developing Policy

Typical policy development initiatives grew out of assessment results and culminated in state plans that doubled as policy statements, thereby galvanizing and invigorating middle school reforms.

Typical policy development initiatives grew out of assessment results and culminated in state plans that doubled as policy statements, thereby galvanizing and invigorating middle school reforms.

For instance, in **Illinois,** the state task force compiled information from a survey and focus groups to produce *Right in the Middle*, a plan that was first submitted to an advisory board and then to the state board of education, where it was unanimously adopted.

In **Connecticut,** key state policymakers (four high-ranking officials from the state education agency, three from health services, and one from human resources) participated on the MGSSPI task force. The major part of its energy was devoted to developing recommendations for the continuation of middle grade education. Subcommittees' recommendations were compiled in Connecticut's formal report, also called *Right in the Middle*.

"One outstanding result of the MGSSPI in Connecticut," notes the project's staff, "has been the establishment of a middle grade policy-making effort at the state level. Connecticut's interagency MGSSPI project is the first organization on this level to be devoted full-time to promoting middle level education throughout the state."

"There was no policy or shared vision for middle schools" in **Indiana,** either, prior to the Carnegie grant. During the grant period, some major actions took place. A middle level policy manual, *Betwixt and Between*, was developed. The state board of education drafted changes in middle school requirements that deleted references to subject-matter time rules and mandated a balance of interdisciplinary learning experiences in all subject areas. Finally, the state task force was expanded to form an Adolescent Advisory Board to ensure the continuation of reform efforts.

In **Texas,** "at the state policy level, middle schools had been ignored while reforms focused on early childhood education and high school graduation requirements." To bring the needs of middle school students to light, the task force produced *Spotlight on the Middle: Report of the Texas Task Force*.

This report, which outlines strategies for restructuring middle school education, "will serve primarily as a policy tool." It refrains from recommending additional mandates for districts and campuses. It focuses instead on identifying laws and administrative rules that impede the implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations, improving technical assistance to districts and campuses, and exploring ways to provide needed revenues.

The **Rhode Island** MGSSPI staff helped to establish an active network of middle level educators, "the first and only advocacy group for middle level concerns in the state." This network subsequently took up policy-revision questions, ultimately producing *From the Margins to the Middle: A Call for Reform*. RIMLE is now seeking endorsement of its policy guidelines from groups of professional educators, "a not-so-subtle attempt to diffuse any opposition," according to the project director.

As in Rhode Island, the **Delaware** project referred policy questions to professionals in the field. In statewide workshops and seminars, planning teams developed *Guidelines for Middle Level Education in Delaware: An Agenda for Success*. "A major provision of the new state policy requires cooperative relationships with health and social service agencies."

The five **North Dakota** task force subcommittees met to present their reports at an April 1991 meeting (held after the project's workshop series and study groups had provided their insights). The policy recommendations growing out of that meeting are shown in Appendix C.

After extensive assessment activities in **Kentucky,** the steering committee of the state task force drafted a state plan called *Middle Morphosis: Kentucky's Plan for Young Adolescents*. The full task force discussed and revised the report, concentrating especially on the policy recommendation section.

Some policy development initiatives faltered or are still in process.

In **New York,** for example, the state task force had intended to "undertake a comprehensive review of middle level education and related youth policies, programs, and services and develop a state level multiagency plan for helping middle level students, especially those who are disadvantaged." However, since the "three agencies with major responsibility for developing the plan did not have a lengthy history of extensive multiagency cooperation and collaboration to meet the needs of middle grades students . . . it took more time than anticipated to develop . . . a common agenda." When the New York project was not re-funded, the policy effort was dropped.

Policy development stalled in **Utah,** too, though for a different reason. Originally, the state's Middle School Task Force proposed to ascertain the status of the state's middle level schools, form working subcommittees to pinpoint the inadequacies of state and local policies governing middle schools, and propose strategies to correct the policy problems. At the end of the grant period, however, only the assessment stage had been completed.

South Carolina is still struggling toward consensus on middle level education policy. The state is about midway through a seven-step policy development process.

Vermont appointed a 27-member task force, which created a mission statement and conceptual frameworks for middle level education. In addition, the state published *The Middle Matters: Transforming Education for Vermont's Young Adolescents* which contains a mission statement and conceptual frameworks. This task force document includes eight recommendations, one of which states: "The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators should make mandatory for all teachers in grades five through eight the middle grades endorsement."

Providing Professional Development

Professional development has two important dimensions, preservice and inservice. Most of the state projects concentrated on the latter, with one notable exception, Massachusetts.

Preservice Partnerships

Massachusetts reports that their project "used MGSSPI funds as a catalyst and leverage for long-term, systemic change linking urban middle grade restructuring to the reform of teacher preparation." Specifically, the Massachusetts project created five partnerships between six urban middle grade schools and a nearby college or university (Lesley College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst each have links to two schools). Joint professional development teams from paired institutions have two purposes. One is to carry out the planning and professional development activities required for restructuring. The other is to help develop school-based, middle grade certification programs.

Part of a case study shows how the system works:

> The Bartlett School in Lowell is a K-8 school with 708 students, 46 percent of whom are minorities (mostly Cambodian and Puerto Rican), 71 percent of whom receive free or reduced school lunch, and 37 percent of whom speak a first language other than English. The school is paired with the University of Lowell, a state university that offers a master's level graduate degree program in teaching, but does not have a middle grades teacher preparation and certification program.
>
> In its first year, the restructuring team developed three criteria for a clinical-site, middle grade teacher certification program. It should provide aspiring middle grade teachers with (1) an in-depth understanding of the developmental phases of early adolescence, (2) knowledge of middle grade curriculum, teaching, and learning, and (3) field experiences, in which theory provides the analytic apparatus for practice and practice provides the opportunity for testing theory.
>
> The Massachusetts project hopes to promote the development of school-site, middle grade certification programs through such school-university collaborations. According to the project report, however, this approach is not easy: "Ironically, it has taken some time to convince school and college/university faculty to abandon traditional teacher preparation programs and that the state department of education is serious about promoting new ways of preparing the teacher workforce."

Inservice Activities

Holding Professional Meetings

If MGSSPI funds set off a flurry of preservice professional development, they touched off a veritable blizzard of inservice activities. At least three dozen professional meetings—conferences, workshops, and institutes—delved into appropriate curriculum and instruction, interagency collaboration on behalf of at-risk students, and the skills that educators need to restructure their schools. For details, see Figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8

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Purposeful Meetings

- A **colloquium** is a meeting, usually academic in nature, at which specialists deliver addresses on one topic or related topics and then answer questions related to their presentations.
- A **symposium** is a formal meeting at which specialists deliver short addresses on one topic or related topics (so a symposium is a colloquium without the questions).
- An **institute** is an intensive course of instruction, usually brief, on a particular topic within a particular field.
- A **workshop** is an intensive educational program, usually brief, for a relatively small group of people who participate in problem solving; workshops are smaller in scale and more participatory than institutes.
- A **conference** is a formal meeting for discussion and interchange of views on a common concern.
- All meetings may **be invitational** or **open,** depending on whether they are limited to invited participants.

Technical Assistance

Sometimes people who were to provide technical assistance to middle level educators first had to expand their own knowledge and thus began by seeking out professional development activities for themselves.

For instance, when state review teams visited **New Jersey's** 30 special needs districts targeted to receive additional funds for middle level improvement, the teams found urban educators to be "interested in middle grades reform, but many had little idea of how to proceed."

Consequently, the staff from the state education agency's new Division of Urban Education went on a four-day retreat at Monmouth College to establish specific responsibilities and objectives in working with the district.

Project activities also included training for three staff members from the departments of education and human services in the principles of the Comer model, which will be implemented in 1992-93 in the state's 30 special needs districts. The three trainees in turn trained the entire staff of the Division of Urban Education.

The New York Project developed training and staff development programs in four areas that are critical to middle level education (interdisciplinary teacher teams, interdisciplinary instructional programs, heterogeneous grouping, and the establishment of advisor-advisee programs). In addition, team members trained a cadre of turnkey trainers in each area. The trainers, in turn, are conducting seminars for teachers throughout the state.

Figure 9

■

Professional Meetings on Middle Level Schooling in MGSSPI States

1. Conferences

A. Meetings on appropriate **curriculum and instruction:**

- A statewide conference in **Delaware** on the implementation of middle school concepts.
- Several regional conferences for school personnel in **Connecticut** on critical issues in middle level education, such as heterogenous grouping and flexible scheduling.
- A preconference in **Georgia** to acquaint 150 teachers, administrators, youth service providers, parents, and community figures with the concepts in *Turning Points*.
- 1-day conferences for middle level educators, board members, and parents in **Utah** on "all important aspects of middle level education."
- A symposium for 200 participants in **Indiana** on curriculum issues.
- A 1-day symposium for **Indiana's** state education agency (SEA) staff and the project task force on successful middle level practices.
- A **Maryland** conference on curriculum and instructional decision making in middle-grade reform, held for the restructuring teams from four demonstration schools.
- Six regional miniconferences for parents and teachers in **Vermont,** along with 14 after-school and inservice sessions on middle level reform, and two additional conferences: one co-sponsored with the Vermont Association of Middle Level Education and another at which the middle level task force subcommittees presented workshop sessions on their conceptual frameworks.
- Two middle level educator conferences in **Colorado** organized with help from the University of Northern Colorado and the Colorado Association of Middle Level Educators.

B. Meetings to **link groups** (usually on behalf of **at-risk students**):

- An awareness session held at the beginning of the grant period for representatives from **Arkansas'** 50 districts to pinpoint ways to meet the needs of adolescent students from disadvantaged areas.
- A conference for **Delaware's** school and SEA staff, in addition to government decision makers, on interagency cooperation as it applies to middle schools.
- A joint conference, largely for **Mississippi's** community teams, to begin formulating action plans on effective education, the provision of health services, and community and parental involvement.
- An interagency conference in **Kentucky** involving 675 persons at the Kentucky Middle School Association's fall conference to spotlight services available to young adolescents (nutrition, self-esteem, after-school programs, health department services, etc.).

- A 1-hour teleconference on the needs of early adolescents and interagency programs to meet those needs, beamed throughout **Florida** via satellite, videotaped, and made available to all middle schools.
- A 1-day conference so that all 12 study groups from different **North Dakota** communities could present their final reports, which would subsequently be submitted to local school boards and approved.

C. Meetings to **build the skills needed for restructuring:**

- A statewide conference for **Connecticut's** district policymakers on the financial and personnel implications of implementing *Turning Points* recommendations.
- A statewide conference in **Texas** on restructuring middle schools, held as a preconference to the joint annual conference of the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators.
- A conference cosponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers-HIV Health Project, the Louisiana SEA, and the **Mississippi** MGSSPI so that county coalition teams could network and build skills in community problem solving and comprehensive planning development.

D. Meetings with **multiple focuses:**

- **Maryland's** 2-day conference on developmental and instructional needs of middle level youth, school restructuring, and comprehensive services for young adolescents and their families.
- **Louisiana's** 3-day conference on curriculum and instruction, school improvement, and counseling/social services support and collaboration with the community, held for superintendents, teachers, principals, supervisors, regional directors, task force members, and curriculum directors.

2. Workshops and Institutes

A. Meetings on appropriate **curriculum and instruction:**

- **North Dakota's** workshop series (held in 10 locales for 6 hours on second Saturdays for 5 months), focusing on adolescent development as a rationale for middle school practices.
- **Alaska's** three regional, 2-credit training sessions for 100 educators on strategies for implementing *Turning Points* recommendations.
- **Louisiana's** series of regional, inservice training programs for administrators and teachers on implementing the recommendations in *Turning Points for Louisiana.*
- **Virginia's** 1-week, multistate, invitational workshop for teams of middle school educators (includes higher education) to design a middle-school curriculum guide that includes basic information about middle grades curriculum, optimal delivery of curriculum, and assessment design. Participating states: **Maine, Virginia, Kentucky, Connecticut, Wisconsin.**
- **Arkansas'** statewide, middle level workshop to raise awareness among superintendents and principals from 49 school districts and to ascertain and meet their needs for technical assistance.

Continued on next page

Figure 9

Continued from previous page

- **New Mexico's** 2-day institute for administrators and teachers on middle level concerns like advisor-advisee programs, teaming for interdisciplinary teaching, flexible block scheduling, and staff development, held at the SEA's annual Leadership Institute.

B. Meetings to **link groups** to work in behalf of **at-risk students:**

- **Colorado's** workshops to assist local school leaders in strengthening their programs for the disadvantaged.
- **Colorado's** day-long workshop of service learning, produced jointly with the Governor's Job Training Office and the Metro Denver Service Learning Steering Committee.
- **Florida's** five regional, 1-day workshops on interagency involvement, chiefly for teachers and principals, but also including people from health services, community programs, business, and law enforcement.

C. Meetings to **build the skills needed for restructuring:**

- **Delaware's** workshop for their nine statewide teams of 109 people to identify the components of policies and guidelines to be presented to the state board of education.
- **Maryland's** series of workshops to prepare the staffs of model schools to conduct school self-assessment (topics included collaborative problem-solving processes, shared decision making, and strategic planning). In addition, the SEA sponsored three conferences to meet project schools, needs for restructuring.
- Three 1-day institutes in **Massachusetts** for the school-university partnership restructuring teams to focus on (1) the development of mission statements, (2) creation of school plans and clinical-site teacher preparation programs, and (3) change processes in schools—especially how to extend restructuring efforts from the core team to the rest of the faculty.
- **Alaska's** 1-week mentor teacher institute to help the 40 members of 10 teams to establish collegial support systems in schools with high concentrations of at-risk students.

D. Meetings with **multiple focuses:**

- **Alaska's** three regional, 2-day training sessions for 150 principals of the 180 restructuring coalition schools on (1) teaching a core of common knowledge, (2) ensuring success for all students, and (3) reengaging families in the education of young adolescents.
- **Alaska's** three regional, 2-day training sessions for 200 principals and school leadership team members on (1) empowering teachers and administrators and (2) school-community ties.
- **Connecticut's** two 1-week summer institutes for teachers: a general institute on interdisciplinary teaching and another on the change process for the staffs of the state's four restructuring schools.

Source: Compiled from the MGSSPI 1991 State Final Reports.

Presentations

Several state projects included the presentation of information about *Turning Points* and state middle school improvement activities through professional literature or meetings.

Illinois, for example, submitted a series of articles to journals, including the journal of the Illinois principal's association, and crafted a news release that appeared in the newsletter of the Association of Illinois Middle-Level Schools (AIMS).

Through the **North Carolina** project, the thrusts of the state report, *Last Best Chance*, were presented to many gatherings at state, regional, county, and community levels:

- 300 teachers at the North Carolina Association of Educators.
- 600 educators at the Vocational Education Association's annual conference.
- 60 educators from 45 school districts at a Middle School Clinic of the North Carolina School Boards Association.
- 400 college juniors in the teacher education program at a meeting of North Carolina Teaching Fellows.
- 200 people attending the Region 7 and 8 School Administrator's Conference
- 1,600 people attending the Middle Grades Conference of Regions 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8.
- 30 people at the Orange County Youth Council meeting.
- 100 people at a meeting of the Craven County Middle Grades Task Force.
- 30 people at a Martin Middle School PTA meeting.
- 20 people at a meeting of the Duplin County Youth Council.

Site Visits

Several state projects carried out extensive site visits for various reasons.

- **Indiana** used funds from a separate Lilly Endowment grant to send task force members to schools, conferences, symposia, and professional development centers in seven other states.
- In **Massachusetts,** restructuring teams in school-university partnerships visited the New England League of Middle Schools Center to get inservice training and to gain access to the center's database, which contains profiles of 200 middle grade schools.
- Task force members in **Connecticut** visited a selection of urban, suburban, and rural middle schools in various areas of the state. The firsthand information they collected about middle grade education and about the needs of middle grade educators enabled the task force members to propose realistic steps to encourage further reforms.

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Instituting and Supporting Model Schools

State Training and Support Programs

Model schools (also referred to as demonstration, restructuring, innovative, or improving schools) are described as a feature of the MGSSPI in several states: **Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina,** and **Washington.**

In most cases, states are strengthening the capacity of demonstration school staffs to assess needs, lay plans, and implement reforms to make middle school education more consistent with the recommendations in *Turning Points.*

In **Connecticut,** the approach was fairly typical. Staffs of four schools received training in the capacity to conduct middle level reform, collected data on student achievement and school performance, identified areas that needed improvement, and produced action plans to be implemented this year.

Similarly, **Rhode Island** chose four demonstration and training sites. All four schools are now in various stages of developing site-based improvement plans, which concentrate on creating small communities of learning and improving academic performance by fostering health and fitness.

Maryland, too, places a strong emphasis on developing the skills of School Improvement Teams (SITs) in its four model schools, but has been particularly attentive to documenting the change process as it unfolds.

Schools in **Colorado's** several regional networks share information and staff development activities and work collaboratively on problems like tracking, interdisciplinary team teaching, and coordination with health and community organizations. The network adds a twist, though. Its schools are also piloting a new information acquisition process that will compare the incidence of alienation indicators among at-risk students in schools that have and have not implemented the recommendations in *Turning Points.*

Teacher leaders in four **Washington** schools affiliated with professional development centers are each developing plans based on one or more of the *Turning Points* recommendations. In one school, which chose to focus on the integrated curriculum, one-third of the faculty divided into teams that created integrated units of study.

In a second school, which also chose the integrated curriculum, a five-member team created an integrative course in environmental studies.

A third school chose two areas of focus, parent involvement and an integrative curriculum. To address the first focus, one set of teachers arranged an invitational colloquium (the event eventually led to a partnership with the Citizen's Education Center Northwest); and a teacher with special training in multicultural studies and parenting presented a session especially for African-American parents. The set of teachers working on the integrative curriculum attended workshops on the subject and spent a year planning and initiating integrative curriculum units.

In a fourth school concentrating on linkage to community agencies and service learning, an active planning group of teachers, counselors, and parents met regularly to educate themselves and create a long-term action plan. They also organized a fair of community agencies and helped institute service learning activities, which included tutoring at an elementary school and a sixth-grade recycling project.

The Washington report notes that the two more successful schools "had strong participatory decision-making structures already in place" and were already structured according to teams rather than departments.

The six urban schools in partnership with **Massachusetts** colleges and universities are striving to implement *Turning Points* recommendations, but also to help develop school-based, middle grade certification programs. Each partnership has featured extensive planning and staff development activities, including school and college visits, seminars, and workshops. Restructuring teams also received technical assistance and small grants for planning and staff development.

Both **Alaska** and **California** boast huge networks devoted to improving schools. In Alaska, 25 schools serve only the middle grades, yet 180 schools joined the *Turning Points* Coalition. All schools received a self-assessment instrument and a good deal of training through the state's active staff development network.

In California, as a result of the Middle Grade Reform Model (which grew out of a 1987 task force report), 115 middle level schools were grouped into 10 strategically located Regional Networks. All schools in each network make a minimum three-year commitment to achieve reform goals. One "Foundation School" in the network carries out network leadership functions. The rest of the schools—there are usually about 10 of them—are referred to as "Partnership Schools." The videotapes developed through the California project will portray the work of the improving schools in the 10 Regional Networks.

The **New Jersey** MGSSPI staff reports that demonstration schools in their state are implementing programs to promote health and stabilize families because policymakers have taken the view that "to improve the outcomes for students in the more depressed urban and rural districts, more than educational reforms are needed."

Consequently, the MGSSPI expanded School-Based Youth Services (SBYS) to the middle grades and created FamilyNet, a program to (1) coordinate policy and the planning and delivery of services among seven state agencies and (2) assist special needs school districts and community organizations in them to improve services to students and their families. To create comprehensive middle school improvement models, SBYS, FamilyNet, and a third program, City Schools of Excellence, have been integrated into seven schools in three districts.

Lessons Learned from Model Schools

As model school programs evolve, states are devising ways to capture and apply the lessons learned in the process:

- **Partnerships.** Framers of the **Massachusetts** project foresee the six current school-university partnership schools as becoming "lighthouse sites" in four regional networks of improving schools. The schools in the network schools will pool their resources to support professional development, among other restructuring initiatives. Along similar lines, **Arkansas's** "partnering schools" (i.e., the 18 that applied, but were not selected, as model schools) will receive technical assistance from the state education agency and become "critical friends," sharing information, experiences, and resources with the 10 model schools.

- **Technology.** The **California** videotape series to document the work of improving schools in the regional networks has already been described. **New Mexico** is also disseminating insights electronically. The MGSSPI grant established MIDNET, a telecommunications network linking the state's nine model schools. MIDNET eventually connected with more than 50 other middle schools in the state. MIDNET provides bulletin boards for teacher-to-teacher or student-to-student communication, exchange of interdisciplinary packages, announcements of meetings, and so forth.
- **Process duplication**. Model schools in **Connecticut** are not only making changes themselves, but are also piloting a school improvement process developed during the MGSSPI. If the process is successful, other middle schools can apply it.
- **Documentation. Maryland** is carefully documenting the change process of its model schools by means of two planner documents and periodic reports from the schools. The various documents will be synthesized and disseminated as a change prototype for other schools.
- **Points of leverage. South Carolina** intends to disseminate information about its network of associate schools through the state education agency's "Professional Development Office, instructional consultants, and the many other reform levers' of the State Department of Education."

Chapter 4

Major Accomplishments of MGSSPI Projects

The whole may be equal to the sum of its parts in mathematics; but in many other human endeavors, the whole often turns out to be greater than the sum of the parts.

That is the case with the MGSSPI. In fact, the most important result of the various projects went beyond original expectations: middle level education came to the center of attention at the state level.

> *The most important result of the various MGSSPI projects went beyond original expectations: middle level education came to the center of attention at the state level.*

Attention at the State Level

Several state reports included comments like this one from the MGSSPI project coordinator in **Colorado:** "The project definitely put a focus on middle-level education at the state level. It also supported what was already happening and aided the spread of excellent practice."

Furthermore, when the spotlight finally fell on middle level learners, it became clear how different they are from younger or older students. For instance, the project director in **North Dakota** noted, "There is a recognition, finally, that the students in the middle are in fact unique, not elementary and not secondary."

Indeed, according to the **Arkansas** project director, the project has brought an awareness of the developmental needs of youth and how the mismatch between those needs and current school structure contributes to discipline problems in the middle grades.

The increased state level attention seemed to release a lot of pent-up energy in **Indiana,** because a primary obstacle there, says the project report, "was the lack of leadership from the state for reform and state policies that impeded implementation of the *Turning Points* recommendations, particularly in the areas of subject matter time and teacher licensing patterns."

During the 15 months of the MGSSPI, the Indiana State Board of Education drafted changes in middle school curriculum requirements. The board also adopted a resolution formally urging Indiana's local school corporations to proceed with the restructuring necessary for middle level reforms.

In several states, a recognition dawned that improving the school performance of young adolescents—particularly those most at risk of school failure—requires more than educational services. The **North Carolina** project reports, for example, "In the two regional planning committees and the State Advocacy Council, there was a decided shift toward looking at the whole young adolescent. Systematic approaches to assisting at-risk students have now become essential in school planning."

Though access to health services remains a touchy subject in **North Carolina,** state level planning groups have "reached a new level of understanding" about them. The report adds that "one or two success stories involving Saturday clinics turned the tide. Health access is on the verge of being a primary consideration in these planning groups. Grant activities clarified the need, and how other supportive measures are necessary to make things happen."

In some states, many kinds of supportive measures are materializing. The **North Dakota** project reports that "strong, well-thought-out activity at the local level has created a major impetus for change at the state level."

The **Illinois** report adds, "This planning initiative has awakened a sleeping giant in Illinois."

The MGSSPI helped shape a more informed, unified position among people and organizations concerned with middle level education.

Informed, Unified Advocacy

A second result was that MGSSPI helped shape a more informed, unified position among people and organizations concerned with middle level education.

In many states, when the project began, middle level educators had no answer to the question, Where are we? The **Illinois** report was typical in remarking, "Previous to the awarding of this grant, there had been no state-level investigation of middle level education."

During the first phase of the MGSSPI, various types of assessments helped to clarify the status of middle level programs and practices:

- At least 6 states developed survey instruments for middle school educators and other groups.
- At least 3 states developed some type of middle level school assessment.
- At least 10 states produced reports reflecting in-depth inquiries into their middle level education systems.
- At least 2 states conducted an extensive series of public forums to collect information about middle level education.

A common vision seemed to emerge, too, from the hundreds of professional and public meetings that culminated in the mission statements, policy statements, and plans described in Appendix C and the various other products described in Appendix B.

If assessment isolated problems, and meetings yielded agreement about what to do about them, networking laid the foundation for action.

"The project's greatest accomplishment," declares the Alaska report, "has been providing a forum for middle level education in **Alaska.** Prior to the inception of the project, there was no opportunity for middle level educators to communicate with one another."

The report concludes that once the 180 middle grade schools joined in their self-improvement coalition, middle level educators from all over the huge, sparsely populated, northernmost state felt connected to each other and assumed a strong sense of ownership for the project.

The **New York** report refers to the positive outcomes of educators helping each other. The Project Director believes that the chief positive outcome of the MGSSPI in New York was:

> We got training programs for schools that have been asking for such programs for two years. We also have trained field people to deliver the programs. Practitioners helping practitioners in this way fosters a climate of collaboration, and that helps schools.

Another valuable result of networking in New York, according to the state's project report, was the closer working relationships and increased trust among staffs of the three primary agencies serving young adolescents: education, health services, and social services.

The MGSSPI frequently prompted or advanced action already in progress.

The **Indiana** report expressed similar concordance:

> For the first time, the Indiana Department of Education, the Indiana Middle School Association, the Lilly Endowment, Inc., the Carnegie Foundation, the Community Leaders Allied for Superior Schools, the Indianapolis Public Schools, the Indiana State Board of Health, the Indiana Human Services Department, the Middle Grades Improvement Program Network, the Higher Education Network, and concerned individuals are working together in behalf of middle level reform.

Impetus Toward State and Local Reform

A third general result is that the MGSSPI frequently prompted or advanced action already in progress. One line of activity concerned the establishment of a middle level presence in state education agencies.

State-Level Changes

In the **New Mexico** state education agency, the absence of a full-time, middle level focus meant that only one-fourth of one staff member's time could be devoted to the MGSSPI project. Managing and coordinating routine project functions were therefore delayed, slowing overall project progress.

New Mexico's Middle Level Education Advisory Committee recommended establishing a full-time, middle level education position in the state education agency. The state approved the recommendation; and the position was created and filled. Now, the project report says, "An agency-identified person can advocate for policy change at the state level as well as act as a resource for training to middle schools throughout the state."

The **North Dakota** task force also proposed that a middle level unit be established in the state education agency, with necessary changes in state record systems, certification and accreditation regulations, curriculum guidelines, and teacher education programs. A middle level specialist has been designated and has begun to work on the needed policy changes.

Two other states took similar steps. **Louisiana** established a Bureau of Middle Schools within its state education agency; and in **Texas,** an entire Division of Middle School Education was created and a Senior Director was appointed by the Commissioner of Education.

A much more obvious line of activity stemming from the MGSSPI, however, is the restructuring that is taking place in the various states' model schools. These schools are engaged in making real changes that will directly affect the lives of young adolescents.

Local Restructuring

A staff member who heads a technical assistance team working with a school improvement team in one of **Maryland's** four model schools provided an example:

> The rural school that I work with really didn't have enough access to any kind of health delivery, and many kids in that school are very undertreated because their parents don't have health insurance.
>
> Through the state policy council, we learned that there was a new pilot health program going through the legislature. It allowed us to get a nurse practitioner right at the school.
>
> She is more than just a nurse—more like a physician's assistant. She has enough additional training so that she can write prescriptions. She can also refer students to the health department or other physicians.
>
> I was in that school one day when 16 kids came in complaining of sore throats, though none had fevers. The nurse practitioner immediately did throat cultures. Out of the 16 kids who complained, 14 were carrying strep.
>
> The nurse practitioner wrote the prescriptions. Filling them was the only thing the parents had to pay for.

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Sustained Reforms Despite Austerity

A fourth notable achievement of the state projects is that they sustained reform during a period of extreme budgetary austerity. Several factors have contributed to this longevity.

Visibility

One sustaining factor has been the visibility of participating in a nationally known project. As the **Rhode Island** report says:

> Participation in the Carnegie Project is being used as a reason to keep middle level development going in the face of deep budget cuts. . . . [Model school] site principals report being spared the massive budget cuts incurred by other schools.

The result in **New Jersey** ran along similar lines: "The Carnegie grant helped redefine New Jersey's education agenda and helped to protect improvement initiatives from budget cuts."

Work of Policy Groups

The broadly representative policy groups formed during the projects were another important source of continuing support. As the **Colorado** report explains:

> Our most difficult problem was and is getting the attention of key legislators at a time when the state is facing a financial crisis. We have addressed this problem by working closely with an interim committee on licensing educators and setting professional standards and by establishing a policy council.

The policy council has offered a good deal of helpful advice on the politics of policy, which was especially helpful in bringing about a service learning initiative.

The MGSSPI projects sustained reform during a period of extreme budgetary austerity.

Broad Participation and Representation

Widescale participation and collaboration has sustained momentum, too. Even though "the state's economic condition is sometimes a barrier to change," **North Dakota's** report acknowledges, "health, social services, professional, and community groups have been involved in the BRIDGES Project and expect to implement interagency coordination and development of model projects proposed by the state task force."

Planning Momentum

In **Vermont,** the MGSSPI created momentum that helps propel reforms through periods of austere economic conditions. Before the major budget deficit occurred, project participants had already defined goals and a mission for the middle grades, created conceptual frameworks to guide reform, developed an extensive resource guide, and enhanced the capacity of localities to initiate and sustain reform.

Negotiation Processes

Finally, negotiation at state levels has furthered the success of some projects. In **Virginia,** after a delay for state education agency restructuring, the department recommended to the state board that the middle level restructuring initiative be continued "with modifications to accommodate the reduced state budget previously allotted for the restructuring initiative."

The board affirmed continuation; and "at this time," the Virginia report goes on, "the restructuring initiative seems to have gained momentum, with many schools committing to the restructuring process, developing plans for restructuring of the middle grades, and establishing connections with identified schools with exemplary middle grade programs."

Chapter 5

■

Insights and Challenges

Collectively and individually, the MGSSPI states report caveats, insightful remarks, and challenges that are worth considering when undertaking systemic reform initiatives.

One such set of observations from state project concerns ways to conserve time or energy or both. Other insights deal with making progress, fostering connections, and developing professional skills. Challenges faced by the projects included unforeseen turnovers in leadership, constraints caused by competing priorities in state agencies in a time of budget austerity, confusion that resulted from murky purposes and unclear goals, and the difficulties in obtaining interagency cooperation.

Let's look first at the ways project staff found to save time and energy.

The MGSSPI experience discovered important caveats, insights, and challenges worthy of consideration when undertaking systemic reform.

Conserving Time and Energy

Improve Everything Immediately?

Many state reports included animated comments about the surprisingly large amounts of time and work involved in the projects. Goals sometimes looked deceptively simple. **New York**'s Activity 2, for instance, involved the development of a list of desired student outcomes and "authentic" assessments to detect them (see Appendix C). "Quite simply," the project staff reports, "the complexity of the task was grossly underestimated."

When laying out project goals and objectives, therefore, it may be wise to consider how much there is to do in how little time by how few people. The **Rhode Island** report speaks to the issue of multiple undertakings in an interesting way. When the state education agency issued a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit volunteers to be model middle schools, the RFP required a commitment to "plan to implement the

Turning Points recommendations on small communities of learning, teach a core academic program, and eliminate tracking," as well as to begin fostering health and fitness—all within one year.

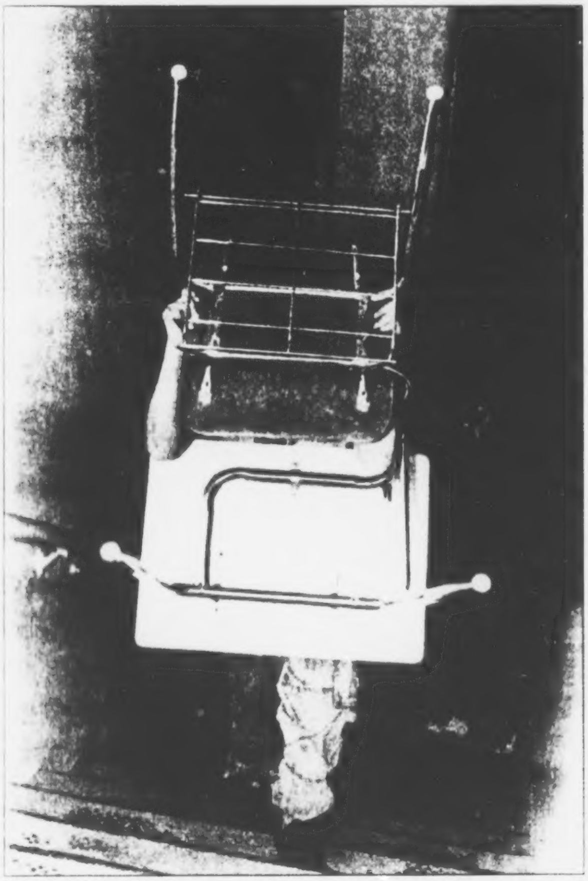
The report candidly acknowledges that this package of tasks was "far more than any of the schools was in a position to undertake." Furthermore, the shortness of time led principals to write the proposals "with only a modicum of input from staff." The effect of haste on "a participatory approach to decision making had not been fully considered at either the state or site levels."

The project staff soon reevaluated their requirements "and assured school teams that, using the *Turning Points* recommendations as a guide, they were free to assess their schools' strengths and determine how to build upon those to achieve the key goals in the Carnegie report."

Progress is made by attending to assessment results, troubleshooting, modeling desired strategies, and using creative funding.

Either a Borrower or a Lender Be

To avoid needless duplication of effort, several states used assessment instruments developed elsewhere or data from studies that had already been conducted.



The **Illinois** report notes, for instance, that "surveys from other states, as well as one from the Association of Illinois Middle Schools (AIMS), were used as a starting point for developing the Illinois survey."

The **Alaska** project borrowed, too. It helped its coalition of middle schools take stock of themselves by adapting an assessment instrument from the Colorado Middle Grades School Assessment. Once the data were collected, the University of Alaska Southeast analyzed it and developed profiles of 25 schools. The profiles helped coalition schools determine where they were and where they wanted to be in relation to each of the eight *Turning Points* recommendations.

In designing the Information Acquisition Process Regarding Disadvantaged Pupils, **Colorado's** project staff found that students' attitudes toward school were not generally measured. Rather than devising an instrument, the project obtained permission to use a recently validated "Student Satisfaction Survey" developed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The **Louisiana** project included plans for a student health survey, but the effort was stymied by legislation limiting the number of surveys administered to students and the amount of personal information that can be requested from them. Project staff were able, however, to use data from two surveys that had previously been completed.

Finally, as noted earlier, the **Massachusetts** project postponed its assessment of middle level education, opting instead to wait and get the data through a nonproject state education agency collection system that would soon become operational.

Such "wait time" characterizes the second set of insights—ways to make progress.

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Making Progress

Many states found that ways to make progress included paying close attention to assessment results, troubleshooting, modeling desired strategies, and using creative funding.

Divide and Build

Based on findings of the state assessment, the **Utah** project divided the state's 40 school districts into Phase I and Phase II categories and adapted project activities accordingly.

The 31 Phase I districts are those in which (1) fewer than one-third of the district leaders had a clear understanding of the philosophy and practices of effective middle school education and (2) schools apply few aspects of the middle school concept. Project activities in Phase I districts included distribution of information (such as copies of *Turning Points*), drawing district representatives into the middle level educators network, and recommending that teachers and administrators reconsider the appropriateness of secondary level practices like interscholastic sports and graduation ceremonies.

Schools in the nine Phase II districts are beginning to implement the more sophisticated *Turning Points* recommendations. One school, for example, is concentrating on interdisciplinary team teaching and the delivery of core classes in an extended block of time. In other locales, schools are concentrating on involving students in community affairs and establishing health-promoting support groups to deal with problems like substance abuse.

What Is Tested Is What Is Attended To

The **Connecticut** project found that its survey served dual purposes: to collect information and to stimulate awareness. The following is an excerpt:

> The administration of the survey to every middle level school in the state and the dissemination of the results was one of the major statewide activities that called attention to the MGSSPI in Connecticut and highlighted the state's commitment to have a leadership role in the continued reform of middle level education. Numerous school district personnel commented that the survey questions helped them to define, in a simple and concise manner, each of the recommendations in *Turning Points*.

Unit Bank

One problem isolated in **Colorado's** strengths and needs assessment was resistance on the part of some teachers to the concept of interdisciplinary instruction.

Reasoning that the resistance might be attributed to lack of time or know-how to develop appropriate interdisciplinary units, the Colorado MGSSPI, its network of innovating schools, the University of Northern Colorado, and the Colorado Association of Middle Level Educators worked jointly to establish the

Interdisciplinary Unit Bank housed at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado. The bank is a collection of exemplary interdisciplinary units developed and piloted by middle grade teachers. Thousands of the units have been distributed to middle level teachers.

Modeling Methods and Behaviors

To help teachers understand cooperative learning strategies, the **North Dakota** workshop series used the methodology with the workshop teachers. The project report notes that midway through the series, a telephone survey of participants:

> . . . suggested that the use of cooperative learning in the workshops was new and problematic for participants. There was initial frustration with the fact that not all readings were distributed to every person. As the rationale for use of similar processes with middle grade students became clear to participants, however, their enthusiasm for the workshops increased. By the end of the workshops, frustration with cooperative learning processes had been eliminated.

In many states, the MGSSPI staff connected with, and were helped by, governors, department of education staff, principals, teachers, parents, legislators, and university professors.

Grants

The **Mississippi** project worked in tandem with the Community Development Coalition (CDC), a state-supported, community problem-solving project.

The two initiatives shared organizational structures, cosponsored a networking conference, and jointly granted $15,000 to each of five target counties. The MGSSPI provided $5,000 to each county to be used toward the creation of middle school plans. The CDC provided the remaining $10,000 for each county to be used on health and human services plans.

Vermont, too, used grants as leverage points for reform. The development thrust of the MGSSPI prompted innovation by providing two types of subgrants: $30,000 was set aside for up to three challenge grants to schools proposing to implement exemplary middle level practices, and $15,000 worth of minigrants of up to $750 each were made available to teams of two or more educators, parents, and human services personnel, who design innovative projects according to specified criteria.

Fostering Connections

In many states, project staff enlisted the help of governors, department of education staff, principals, teachers, parents, legislators, and university professors.

These teams and coalitions likewise show how the state projects included various means of fostering connections.

Governors' Participation

In three of the most dynamic state projects, governors and their representatives took an active interest.

In **North Dakota**, for example, Governor Sinner issued the invitations to participate on the state task force and sent a personal representative to it. This active, variegated task force interacted with participants in the project's workshop series and study groups, recommended a set of policies supportive of middle level education, produced a report in brief and extended versions, and proposed the middle level unit that has been added in the state education agency.

"Beyond bureaucratic efforts, however," the North Dakota report observes, "the task force proposed broadly based educator and citizen education to enable all concerned North Dakotans to form visions of schooling and related services for young adolescents within the framework of a major restructuring effort." Such proposals have set the stage for future educator inservice and public information activities in North Dakota.

In **Connecticut,** too, the governor's office proved to be "a valuable asset to the accomplishment of the project's goals"; and it was especially helpful in securing continuation funds for the project. Key members of the governor's staff met with Carnegie Corporation staff during their on-site visit and lent "support and valuable insight" into the formulation of the continuation proposal.

The **Maryland** Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families served as the project's interagency facilitator, providing policy oversight regarding multiagency services and removing barriers to multiagency collaboration.

Collaborative Relationships

Fostering interdepartmental understanding and cooperation in large organizations, including the state education agency, can be quite frustrating. The following describes one simple tactic that worked for the **Indiana** project:

> This project provided the impetus for a series of noon-hour brown bag luncheons within the Indiana Department of Education. The great interest in the issues that confronted the task force has resulted in improved interdivisional collaboration of efforts to address these issues. This informal mechanism of communication has proven to be very effective and much appreciated.

Focus Groups

The focus group activities in **Illinois** were exceptionally thorough, and data from them were systematically collected and used in the task force's report on middle level education.

Focus group activities began in September 1990 (early in the grant period) when a professor from Southern Illinois University was enlisted to train task force members to act as small-group facilitators at the December sessions of the focus groups.

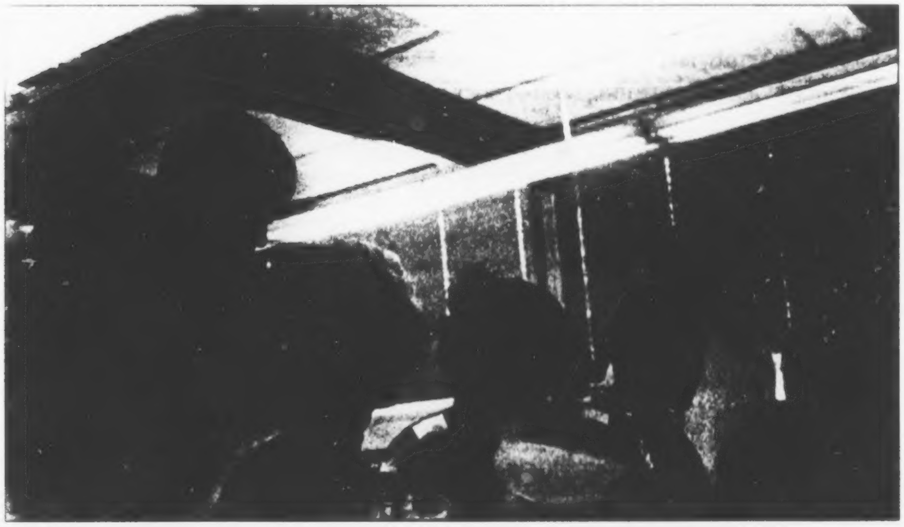
Also in the fall, members of the task force, its advisory board, and personnel at educational service centers were asked to submit names of people to invite to the focus group sessions. The list soon ballooned to 7,000 names.

In November, invitations were sent to everyone on the list, which included all district superintendents, all principals of schools with grades 5-8, parents, legislators, community and business leaders, youth-serving professionals, college deans and professors, and association members likely to have an interest. Invitations included a reservation card, which was to be sent back indicating a preference for one of the four regional locations for the focus group sessions.

Interest was so keen that morning and afternoon sessions had to be scheduled in each of the four locations; even so, several hundred people had to be turned away (they were later invited to make written contributions). Support staff fielded phone calls and sent confirmation cards stating the time and location of designated sessions.

From December 3 to December 7, 50 focus group sessions were conducted. Altogether, they included nearly 600 people. Each concentrated on two simple questions: What are the needs of early adolescents? What should schools, families, and communities do to respond to those needs?

Every focus group facilitator prepared a written summary of the responses. Every participant in a group received a copy of it for review and verification. Then all task force members got the full set of 50 summaries and from them began to identify themes.



A special focus group was held in January 1991 for the Illinois State Board of Education. By February, the task force began its state plan, which was approved the following June. At that meeting, one board member commented that as he spoke to education groups, it appeared that everyone knew of the middle school initiative.

It is certain that at least 600 people knew about it.

Local Expertise

As part of a strategy for implementing local projects, each of the 10 model schools in **Arkansas** selected an expert from a college or university who could advise on matters of planning, evaluation, and data collection and analysis. Teams of three to four people from the schools, along with their consultants, were then trained to use the Middle Grade Assessment Program (MGAP). MGAP identifies real and perceived strengths and weaknesses in middle school programs.

The **Connecticut** project anticipated spending a considerable proportion of their project funds for outside consultants. The project staff found, however, that goals could generally be accomplished using expertise within state agencies or from outside experts who gladly donated time. In addition, these partnerships enhanced the professional skills of middle level educators.

Developing Professional Skills

Many states reported advances in improving the professional acumen of educators. Some states offered graduate credit while in others innovative uses of technology figured prominently.

Graduate Credit

Participants in **North Dakota's** regional workshop series received graduate credit through the University of North Dakota.

Technology Use

More than 300 educators in **Alaska** received graduate credit from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, for participating in an interactive television course titled *Success Strategies for Students at Risk*. During the broadcasts, participants interacted with presenters by telephone.

To develop teachers' knowledge about the middle level concept, the **North Carolina** project created a TI-IN distance-learning television show in which selected task force members discussed the content of the state's middle school education report, *Last Best Chance*. Videotapes of the program were distributed to regional education centers so that educators could borrow or copy the tapes.

Florida, too, produced a television program delivered via satellite and made videotapes of the presentation available to all state middle schools.

The **Maryland** report says, "Three of four [of the model] schools have initiated a data base capability at the school to monitor school progress on student achievement and involvement and additional delineated indicators of success." All four schools participate in a technology-based staff development project that uses print and non-print research-based strategies accessible through videodiscs. Teachers select and view instructional strategies that have been proven effective. They can also select and print information about the strategies, exemplary lessons that use them, and appropriate models for assessing results.

At the end of the first phase of the **Texas** project, electronic mail was operational, and an electronic bulletin board was nearing completion. An electronic system was being set up, too, that would eventually permit electronic communication with all middle schools and perhaps enable them to access centralized data bases.

The **California** videotape series documenting the activities of the state's network of improving schools has already been described, as has **New Mexico's** MIDNET, a telecommunications network linking the state's 9 model schools with more than 50 other middle schools in the state.

Many of these projects were developed despite severe constraints, such as turnovers in leadership, budget cuts, and competing priorities. The remainder of this chapter shows how selected projects dealt with these and other challenges.

The Challenges

Turnovers in Leadership

Because important aspects of the MGSSPI had to occur at the state level, the enthusiasm—and sheer presence—of state leaders could be an important factor in the success of certain aspects of the state's project. The following examples characterize the challenges faced by states when turnovers in leadership occurred.

The MGSSPI staff in **South Carolina** note that "the engagement of the Department of Education in promoting restructuring in the middle grades has been delayed by the transition between the past administration and full development of the incoming administration."

In **New York,** the deputy commissioner for elementary, middle, and secondary education left to become Texas Commissioner of Education; and the state commissioner of health, who had been a strong leader and advocate for MGSSPI, suffered a stroke. Both events, the New York report says, "had a serious effect on project momentum."

In **New Mexico,** 9 months into the 15-month project, the project director resigned. A key video project and the printing and distribution of *Moving Into Action* (see Appendix B) had yet to be completed, and encumbered funds had yet to be distributed to the nine schools participating in the project. As a result, an extension of the grant period had to be obtained to allow time for the new project director to complete these activities.

In another state, the project director left at the end of the first year to pursue other opportunities. The MGSSPI project staff report that "the position of the State Middle Grades Consultant remained vacant until February 1992, and activities on a statewide level have been minimal."

The importance of key leaders and the possibility of losing leaders for one reason or another implies the value of knowledgeable understudies. In **Mississippi,** for example, the project director left to become executive director of the gaming commission, but the project was not delayed because the new project director was already familiar with the project.

State Education Agency Restructuring and Procedural Constraints

Because of restructuring efforts in state education agencies or procedural constraints within state governments, progress in some projects was very difficult.

North Carolina was one such state. The MGSSPI intended to work with the two of the eight regional education centers that had recently hired middle grades consultants. Through the education centers, two multiagency planning committees were to be created for the purpose of implementing recommendations from the state's report, *Last Best Chance* (see Appendix B).

However, state education agency restructuring necessitated reducing the regional centers to six, thus limiting their function to technical assistance. In addition, the two former middle grades consultants were reassigned as instructional specialists. As a result, the regional planning committees were disbanded.

In other states, state education agency restructuring only delayed initiatives. As the **Virginia** Department of Education reorganized, the pace of middle school restructuring slowed down. In **Kentucky,** restructuring held up publication of *Middle Morphosis: Kentucky's Plan for Young Adolescents.*

A Period of Budgetary Austerity

The MGSSPI began after federal support for education had dwindled significantly and during a long, deep recession. It is understandable, therefore, that fiscal realities intruded in some projects.

In **New York,** for example, a severe state budget deficit led to a de facto freeze on state agency expenditures from the autumn of 1990 to the early spring of 1991—regardless of prior commitments or the source of the funding. Consequently, it was several months before MGSSPI funds became available and project activities could commence.

During the **North Carolina** project, the MGSSPI staff report that "the shortfall in state revenue grew from $400 million to $800 million, and the General Assembly pursued massive cuts in all state programs. Relative to the Carnegie activities, there were speculations about loss of the matching state funds."

In these and other states, the grant period was an inauspicious time to undertake reforms, making the accomplishments of the various projects all the more commendable.

Competing Priorities

Two states had extremely bad luck in the timing of activities. In one, during the same month that the Middle Grades Task Force was formed, the state was ranked last on Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. The state superintendent responded immediately by appointing a Task Force on Excellence in Secondary Education. The result, according to the project report, was:

> The work of the Middle Grades Task Force was overshadowed, and the climate within the Department of Public Instruction became one of caution regarding the activities of the Middle Grades Task Force. There were concerns about the number of copies of [the state report] being printed, groups on the distribution list, members on the State Advocacy Council, and about whether the report would be perceived as already sanctioned by the state superintendent.

In **Washington,** a competing political priority completely derailed one of the project's chief goals—raising awareness of effective middle grade practices by means of a statewide invitational conference. As the project staff planned the conference, the Washington Education Association was planning a strike. The climate kept deteriorating, and the strike ensued just days before the conference was to be held. The conference was canceled. According to project staff, even after the two-week strike ended, the negative climate made it inadvisable to reschedule the conference before the end of the school year.

Time Constraints

In many state reports, participants commented with feeling about the amount of work the projects involved and the delays that could be traced to the overload. Assessment and collaboration activities sometimes proved to be especially long, drawn-out affairs.

According to **New Mexico's** report, "The scope and volume of work involved in managing and coordinating the grant was underestimated from the outset. Delays and scheduling readjustments were a natural and logical result."

The **New York** report concurs: "New York State, in writing its initial proposal, overestimated what it could realistically accomplish and underestimated the time required to complete the activities."

Coping with the workload, the **Illinois** report says, makes cooperation within the state education agency an absolute necessity:

> At the close of this first year . . . an enormous amount of work has occurred. One demanding deadline has fallen on the heels of another. To accomplish the tasks to date, there has been an extraordinary amount of cooperation within the agency. Without the cooperation or the resources of the agency, most of this work would still be in progress.

Assessment and collaboration activities sometimes proved to be especially long, drawn-out affairs.

Allowing adequate time for assessment activities seems to be an implication of state reports, too. Assessment activities in **South Carolina** and **Utah** took up most of the 15 months; and the **Arkansas** report comments, "The original schedule did not recognize the incredible amount of time required for administering and summarizing the Middle Grades Assessment Program (MGAP)."

Another area renowned for its time consumption is collaboration.

The project staff in **New York** found that because the state had no tradition of interagency collaboration to meet the needs of middle grade students, it took more time than anticipated for the representatives of various agencies to forge a common agenda, which of course was a prerequisite to the development of any multiagency plan.

South Carolina's first-year proposal anticipated that responsibilities for greater partnership collaboration could be delegated. Actually, the project staff found that "it has been necessary for the project director to devote an enormous amount of attention to working directly with key agency and organization leaders."

Murky or Intertwined Purposes

Many states found that time spent at the beginning on goal-setting and determining purposes saved time down the road. Unclear goals in other states led to confusion, delay, or cancellation of projects.

Some states' experiences seem to support the notion that time should be taken for deciding **exactly** what to do, especially since confusion is a key element in early phases of the change process.

For instance, the **New York** state task force was supposed to develop a statewide multiagency plan to help middle level students, especially those who are disadvantaged, achieve their full potential. The plan never materialized, though, perhaps because the task force was unclear about what it was supposed to do.

The New York report asserts that the MGSSPI would have been better served if "the creation of the multiagency task force had come later in the initiative rather than sooner—time was needed to develop its purpose and charge more specifically."

The **Massachusetts** report reveals that the schools and universities involved in partnerships to develop on-site teacher preparation programs complained that the state education agency did not always clearly articulate what the partnerships should be accomplishing.

MGSSPI project staff defend the omission, though, by pointing out that the partnerships had indicated that they needed the full 1990-91 school year to develop relationships, build trust, and begin joint planning. The report asserts that if the state education agency had taken time to develop a clear vision and criteria for the partnerships, the partnerships' start-up would not have been significantly delayed.

If possible, goals and strategies should be worked out before the project begins or as promptly thereafter as possible.

Otherwise, activities can get held up, as they did in **Georgia.** The project staff there originally intended to conduct a series of nine dialogues, but the state task force lost so much time on deliberations and preparations that the number of dialogues was reduced from nine to five.

At times, too, projects suffered because the full achievement of one goal depended on achieving a preceding one. If the first goal was not accomplished, neither was the second.

This situation occurred in **New York.** Part of that project's Activity 1 involved the development of professional training and staff development programs necessary to help middle level educators gain access to health, social, and other human services programs. The project staff elaborate:

> This training program was to follow and complement the completion of Activities 5 and 6. When activities 5 and 6 were not completed, it became impossible to complete the development of this training program.

In **Utah,** the Middle School Task Force was to divide into subcommittees based on assessment results. Because the assessment took an unexpectedly long time, only one subcommittee had formed by the time the Carnegie Corporation representative made the evaluative on-site visit in May of 1991.

Challenges of Interagency Cooperation

The importance of developing and communicating goals and strategies is also evident in obtaining interagency collaboration.

"I now realize," said **New York's** project director, "how hard it is for schools to network with noneducational agencies." What was learned in New York includes these observations:

- A lot of time needs to be allotted to developing trust and familiarity among personnel at the various agencies that have to work together.

- Care must be taken to build a common understanding of what joint activities are to entail.
- Responsibility for a particular activity should be centered in one agency, and if possible, in one person within that agency, rather than spread around among various people in multiple agencies.

New Mexico project staff sense that the idea of interagency services for young adolescents hasn't altogether coalesced because (1) the state education agency is underfunded and understaffed and (2) there is a general lack of communication among school districts, health and human service agencies, and juvenile justice. For these reasons, they believe that "a major step toward establishing interagency collaboration was the establishment of a middle-level education consultant."

The **South Carolina** report elaborates on the importance of personnel resources in interagency collaboration:

> It is proving to be quite difficult to define a vision for partnership focused on middle schools since most of these agencies are (1) grossly understaffed, especially for community services, (2) crisis-oriented, devoting greatest attention to the most severe problems of older teenagers, rather than early adolescents, and (3) building-bound, having lost most of their outreach staff in the budget cuts of the early 1980s or to assignment to the ever-increasing number of severe cases.

Getting through the turf issues takes time and determination, but once you have a good relationship established, it's ***really*** *great.*

The **Texas** report adds yet another comment in the same vein:

> A large number of state agencies provide health and human services to young adolescents and their families in Texas. Service delivery is not well coordinated, and workloads prevent local offices from pursuing efforts to collaborate.

Turf and ignorance also present formidable challenges to interagency collaboration. As one state staff person commented, collaboration is a delicate matter because all involved agencies compete for the same funds and, in general, no agency is well informed about what other agencies do.

A **Colorado** project staff person agreed that getting through the turf issues takes time and determination, but she added that "once you have a good relationship established, it's **really** great."

As the preceding chapters demonstrate, the *Turning Points* vision of middle grade education, and thus of adolescent growth and development, is realistic and attainable. The MGSSPI is a break-the-mold, systemic, and state level effort intended to galvanize support, and *action*, in middle grade reform. To be sure, states have faced formidable challenges, as discussed in this section. Though daunting, both the anticipated and unanticipated challenges experienced during the first 15 months of the MGSSPI were largely overcome.

In moving from the ideals expressed in the *Turning Points* recommendations to the policies developed and practices implemented through the MGSSPI, 27 states have achieved unparalleled success on the long and difficult road toward middle grade reform.

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Epilogue

On October 10, 1991, the Carnegie Corporation board of trustees awarded two-year continuation grants to 15 of the 27 states participating in the Corporation's MGSSPI. The award of these grants marked the culmination of an extraordinarily productive first year of the initiative and a renewal of the Corporation's commitment to promote fundamental, lasting change in America's middle grade schools. The decisions were difficult because the quality of the states' first year efforts was so high.

Selection of States for Continuation Grants

The amounts of the 15—five more than originally planned—continuation grants ranged from $180,000 to $50,000 over the two-year period that commenced October 1, 1991. In designing the initiative, Corporation staff members had expected to recommend only up to 10 proposals for continuation grants of as much as $200,000 each. However, on review of states' continuation grant proposals and site visit reports, staff members unanimously agreed that the states' experiences during the first year and the quality of their proposals warranted greater flexibility in the number of states selected and the amounts of the grants recommended than had originally been anticipated. The board of trustees agreed wholeheartedly.

States recommended for continuation grants share several favorable attributes. Each of these states' projects is clearly a priority within the sponsoring agency and receives significant support from high-level state leaders. The most promising projects are integrated—but not lost—within a comprehensive, statewide plan for fundamentally reforming precollegiate education.

These 15 states represent the most comprehensive efforts to restructure middle grade education in the United States. Carnegie Corporation does not expect that at the end of the two-year grant period the education of young adolescents will be completely transformed in each of these states. The Carnegie Corporation, and CCSSO, however, expect significant progress in each of these states in the numbers of schools that have adopted *Turning Points* recommendations. It is expected that states will continue to make progress beyond the period of the grant toward statewide restructuring of middle grade schools. CCSSO will continue to assist the states in attaining these goals. A description of the 15 states' projects follows.

Alaska

Alaska skillfully used an existing statewide professional development organization to stimulate significant new interest in middle grade education and reform among the state's educators. The Alaska Staff Development Network, a consortium of local school districts, professional education organizations, teachers unions, and the state department of education, made substantial progress during the first year in raising educators' consciousness about the needs of young adolescents, where little attention had been given before. Over the next two years, the project will expand and strengthen this awareness, primarily through the work of the *Turning Points* Coalition of 185 Alaskan schools. Each coalition member will be encouraged to administer the Alaska *Turning Points* Coalition Assessment, an adaptation of a self-assessment survey created by Colorado's middle grade project. The project will analyze survey data and develop a profile of each coalition school, outlining its current and expected status on each *Turning Points* recommendation. The project also will continue to sponsor the week long *Turning Points* Middle Level Institute, which provides training in the implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations for teams of coalition member schools.

Arkansas

Arkansas achieved considerable success in pursuing a well-conceived, multi-level approach toward improving education for young adolescents. The project established the Arkansas Middle Grade Policy and Practice Task Force, an influential, broad-based group appointed by the governor in May 1990. During the next two years, the task force will build on its first-year success by establishing a speakers' bureau of task force members and others to address national, state, and regional conferences; sponsoring a second series of seminars and focus groups for educators, human service professionals, and business and community groups; producing a high-quality multimedia campaign to promote the recommendations in *Turning Points*; and disseminating a directory of innovative, middle grade schools and consultants. The task force also will conduct a comprehensive analysis of state policies regulating middle grade education and make recommendations based on its findings.

The creation of demonstration and training sites was the project's second goal. Each of 10 schools has formed a site-based management team, conducted a rigorous self-assessment using the Middle Grades Assessment Program developed by the University of North Carolina's Center for Early Adolescence, and produced a plan for restructuring. Beginning in the fall of 1991, each school will conduct extensive professional development; and selected staff members will begin serving as trainers of staff at other schools to initiate a statewide system of professional development.

In a series of meetings, heads of the relevant state agencies, local educators, and advisors from community groups devised a plan to meet the project's third goal: to integrate education, health, and human services in local communities to support adolescent development. The 10 demonstration schools will first test the plan, so that it can be refined and then implemented in communities across the state. The state also is planning to establish a Center for Youth Development in Middle Level Grades at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

California

California has mounted an ambitious effort to stimulate fundamental changes in more than 100 middle schools and use their experiences as the foundation for restructuring all middle grade schools in the state. Project INFORMS—Inservice Network Forums Organized to Reform Middle Schools—is the State Department of Education's effort to disseminate statewide the work of 10 regional networks of middle level "Partnership Schools," which seek to implement the reforms described in *Turning Points* and the state's own report, *Caught in the Middle*. These networks, now in their third year of operation, include 115 schools. Project INFORMS specifically seeks to communicate the experiences of the regional networks to nearly 3,000 other middle grade schools statewide by developing a five-part documentary series of videotapes accompanied by facilitator's guides.

Three of the videotapes and facilitator's guides were completed as scheduled during the first year of the project. The project staff members will produce the remaining two videotapes and facilitator's guides during the next year of the project. These videotapes will describe in detail a core middle grade curriculum and its value to all students regardless of primary language or ethnic background, the case against rigid ability grouping ("tracking") and strategies for teaching heterogeneous classes, and opportunities to use flexible class scheduling as a way of advancing reform in middle grade teaching and learning.

During the third year of the project, the project's staff members will select and train facilitators to conduct staff development activities in all regions of the state using the videotapes and guides. The state department of education has planned a comprehensive strategy for dissemination and technical assistance, which includes distribution of the videotapes to interested parties outside California.

Colorado

Colorado's project emphasized the creation of strong, supportive partnerships to create new opportunities for enhancing middle grade education. A policy council composed of top state officials and chaired by the state's commissioner of education was created to advise state legislators on issues affecting the education of young adolescents, including ways to coordinate service delivery. Also, the Task Force on Middle-Level Education, a committee broadly representative of key public and private youth-serving agencies, developed and presented to the state board of education recommendations for improving the certification of middle grade teachers. Over the next two years, the policy council will continue its advisory role; and the task force will focus on teacher certification and on conforming state accreditation standards for middle grade schools to *Turning Points* recommendations.

The Task Force on Middle-Level Education took the lead in addressing the project's second objective, increased interagency collaboration. Over the next two years, its initiatives will include linking the project to other highly promising reform activities in the state, such as Re: Learning, conducted by the Education Commission of the States, and the state's own High Risk Intervention Unit's projects to provide comprehensive health services.

First-year efforts to help local schools adopt reforms included development of a self-assessment survey reflecting *Turning Points* recommendations which was administered in more than 200 of Colorado's 277 middle grade schools. Self-assessment activities will continue during the second and third years of the project to document each school's progress in implementing *Turning Points* recommendations and to identify needs for training and assistance.

Connecticut

Connecticut has accomplished a great deal during the first year by building on a solid foundation for statewide educational reform established previously by the state department of education. A Task Force on the Education of Early Adolescents was established, representing nearly 30 state and local education, health, and social service organizations, to assess the status of middle grade education and make recommendations for statewide reform. The project also successfully developed and piloted in four schools the Middle Grade School Development Program, an intensive self-assessment that helps schools ascertain their needs and plan cooperatively for improvement.

Two large urban middle schools applied the Middle Grade School Development Program in 1991, and at least 10 other demonstration schools serving educationally disadvantaged youth will do so in 1992. In conjunction with these efforts, the state department of education will develop and disseminate new approaches for coordinating existing educational resources for middle grade students at risk of school failure, such as compensatory, bilingual, and special education, and introduce these approaches in the demonstration sites. The project will create a data system to profile the health status and needs of middle grade students. Health advisory councils at the schools will encourage collaborative approaches to the delivery of health and social services. The project will recommend to the state board of education and state legislature a middle level certification endorsement. It also is defining an appropriate middle level, teacher preparation program for introduction in a consortium of state colleges and universities.

Finally, with assistance from the Connecticut Association of Schools, a new Center for Early Adolescent Education will offer symposia and workshops on critical topics in middle grade education, develop and disseminate information on exemplary middle level practices, and assist in the expansion of existing formal and informal networks of middle grade schools to create more urban-suburban and school-business partnerships.

Illinois

The work of dedicated staff, together with strong support from the Illinois State Board of Education, has enabled the project to raise the education of young adolescents high on the state's agenda. A Middle Grades Task Force, which oversees the project, initiated two major activities to define the status of middle grade education in Illinois: a Middle Grade Practice Survey, distributed to every principal of a school containing grades 5 through 8 and a series of nine conferences, in which more than 600 educators, health professionals, and community leaders shared their opinions on the needs of young adolescents and appropriate programs to serve them. More than 2,500 young adolescents also responded to a survey. These data provided the basis for a technical report on middle grade practices, distributed widely to schools, and a planning document outlining recommendations and strategies for reforming middle grade education.

The recommendations were adopted by the state board of education and will frame the work of the project over the next two years. The state plans to devise an entirely new support system for middle level education, involving the allocation of resources, selection of teachers and staff, staff development, research, and performance standards for schools.

Restructuring schools be will be accomplished by sharing experiences through statewide networks. Professional development committees composed of local educators, parents, and representatives of health and social service agencies, based at 18 educational service centers throughout the state, will coordinate work within the networks and enlist the cooperation of regional teacher education institutions.

Chicago's schools will be a major focus. The project will cooperate with other successful, nationally recognized projects that the state board of education is sponsoring in Chicago—including Re: Learning (the Coalition of Essential Schools Project), Accelerated Schools, and the Urban Education Partnership Program—to form a Chicago Public Schools Restructuring Unit. Thus, four previously separate efforts will be integrated toward a single goal of improving urban education from elementary through high school.

Indiana

Indiana was successful in rekindling long-dormant interest in middle grade education among state-level educators, local practitioners, and the public. Public forums in eight regions of the state evaluated public perception of the recommendations in *Turning Points* and gathered local suggestions for reforming middle grade schools. A task force of middle grade educators, established to oversee the activities of the project, used these findings in a report that represents the first comprehensive policy document on middle grade education in Indiana's history.

Efforts over the next two years will go toward publicizing the task force report through a series of statewide forums. The forums are intended to create a shared vision among educators of the needs and abilities of young adolescents and the effectiveness of developmentally appropriate education. The project also will assist schoolwide restructuring efforts currently underway in at least four urban schools supported previously through the Lilly Endowment's Middle Grades Improvement Project. Over the next two years, these schools will collaborate with other schools within their proximity in planning professional development opportunities for staff and in promoting and sustaining innovation in middle level practices.

Maryland

For several years, the Maryland Department of Education has made restructuring middle grade schools one of its top priorities. In its first year, the project implemented fundamental changes in middle grade practices in four demonstration schools and developed new systems of support for these schools within state and local education agencies, departments of health and human services, and community organizations. Over the next two years, the schools will put school improvement plans into practice and will train staff members from other schools to develop school-based change models. The project will continue to focus on improving the performance of students at risk of school failure.

To assist the demonstration schools, the Maryland department of education has fostered new working relationships with other agencies of state government, and created interdepartmental technical assistance teams. The department, in cooperation with the Governor's Office of Children, Youth and Families and local educational agencies, is creating comprehensive models of service delivery for young adolescents and will implement these systems fully over the next two years. Department staff members consult regularly with the demonstration schools and will intensify this effort by hiring half-time, middle grade consultants at each school to facilitate the change process.

Massachusetts

At the core of middle school reform in Massachusetts is the School-College Partnership Project, an ambitious effort designed to restructure 6 urban middle grade schools and the middle level, teacher preparation programs at 4 colleges or universities simultaneously. Over the next two years, each middle school within the School-College Partnership Project will serve as an anchor to a regional alliance, which also will include 5 to 10 middle grade schools from neighboring districts. Colleges and universities in the state will compete to work with a school alliance in conducting professional development and research focused on the practical problems facing educators in schools.

The *Turning Points* Advisory Committee, established during the first year of the project, consists of representatives of professional and advocacy organizations, school administrators, and university faculty. The advisory committee helped to create the New England League of Middle Schools' Urban Task Force to promote professional development activities for urban middle grade educators. In 1992, the advisory committee will publish a comprehensive, board of education-approved policy report that documents current performance of Massachusetts' middle schools and makes recommendations for middle grade restructuring and reform of teacher preparation programs. Over the next two years, the committee will work with the state department of public health to promote comprehensive health education and human services delivery in the middle grade schools involved in the partnership project and regional alliances.

New Mexico

During its first year, New Mexico successfully combined high-level policy development to improve the education of young adolescents with grass-roots support of changes in selected demonstration schools. The state board of education established a Middle-Level Education Advisory Committee prior to the MGSSPI. The Corporation's grant enabled this committee to continue meeting beyond its initial term and develop a comprehensive set of recommendations that the state board has accepted. Nine Carnegie Grant Schools also were selected and supported as part of the project to demonstrate the process and outcomes of restructuring and to provide assistance to other schools attempting such reforms. These nine schools were linked to one another through MIDNET, a computer network designed by faculty at the University of New Mexico for use by school staff members and students.

New Mexico will continue its top-down, bottom-up strategy for the next two years. The top-down component seeks to create a common "vision" of middle grade education among policymakers and professionals responsible for adolescents' development, as well as parents and community members, primarily through a series of statewide and regional Forums on Institutional Transition. The forums will produce concrete plans for change in precollegiate education, higher education, health, and human service systems, as well as creating standards for measuring institutional changes in the provision of services to young adolescents. The bottom-up component will continue to assist the nine demonstration sites, including the addition of a full-time, middle grade consultant hired by the New Mexico Department of Education. MIDNET will be expanded to include at least 30 more middle level schools or other institutions serving young adolescents. A new technical assistance and resource center will collect and disseminate information on successful middle grade programs and provide assistance to middle grade schools and agencies serving young adolescents and their families.

North Dakota

North Dakota's multitiered project is an excellent example of collaboration between a state education agency, local schools, and the state's leading institutions of higher education. A major aspect of the state's project was to establish 12 community teams, 4 of them located on Indian reservations, to study *Turning Points* and assist each community's middle grade school in restructuring. These teams, consisting of educators, school board members, and parents, met biweekly over a seven-month period to study adolescent development and age-appropriate school practices. Each team produced comprehensive recommendations for restructuring the local middle grade school. Over the next two years, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, in concert with the University of North Dakota, will continue to assist local teams in facilitating school improvement through technical assistance and consultation, a newsletter, and a small grant program for specific reform activities. Four to six new study teams also will be formed in urban, reservation, and rural communities.

Intensive professional development activities commenced during the first year and will continue over the next two years. In the first year, a series of five day-long workshops were held at 10 locations across the state on characteristics of young adolescents and schools that successfully serve them. The workshops, coordinated by three North Dakota institutions of higher education, were offered for college credit, and more than 300 educators participated. The workshop series will continue over the next two years, and at least 650 educators, seven institutions of higher education, and nine teacher resource centers across the state will participate.

Rhode Island

Rhode Island was successful in establishing a formal statewide organization to advocate on behalf of young adolescents, the Rhode Island Middle Level Educators (RIMLE). Before the formation of this organization, middle grade educators had no significant "voice" within Rhode Island's educational policy environment. Over the next two years, efforts will be intensified to assist RIMLE in becoming a broad-based network of professionals with significant influence on statewide policies and practices affecting young adolescents. The organization will make an effort to recruit underrepresented minority professionals. It also will hold at least three statewide conferences per year, providing professional development activities for middle grade educators.

During the past year, the Rhode Island project also assisted faculty at four middle grade schools in planning changes in the schools' educational programs based on *Turning Points* recommendations. These schools will continue to serve as demonstration sites for reforming middle grade schools across the state.

South Carolina

South Carolina's project is unusual in that it is administered by a joint committee of the state legislature, the South Carolina Education Improvement Act Select Committee. The project concentrated during the first year on the assessment of current practices in institutions serving young adolescents. Representatives from 40 middle schools across the state participated in one of four self-assessment conferences in which 145 principles and practices extrapolated from *Turning Points* were discussed and evaluated. In the second and third years of the project, the faculty of 28 of these schools will participate in an intensive program of training, leadership development, and technical assistance through the South Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching and School Leadership, in preparation for reforming their schools' academic programs. These 28 schools will serve as demonstration sites for middle grade restructuring throughout the state.

First-year assessment activities also included self-assessment conferences for staff members of health and human service agencies, teachers, parents, and professionals from private and nonprofit organizations. Over the next two years, the project will sponsor additional meetings and workshops for key organizations of health education coordinators, health teachers, and school nurses on issues critical to the healthy development of adolescents. The project also will conduct a survey of best approaches to parent-school partnerships and will hire a full-time, parent involvement facilitator to work primarily with the 28 demonstration schools.

Policy development activities during the first year centered on educating key elected officials and agency leaders about the needs of young adolescents, and these will continue over the next two years. The state department of education's agencywide Middle Grades Team will coordinate changes in curriculum and assessment, among other reforms. Professional organizations of school board members and school administrators will promote a new "vision" of middle level education in numerous meetings and statewide conferences.

Texas

Project activities in Texas revolved around the Task Force on Middle School Education, a broadly representative group of educators, health-care professionals, and policymakers. Through a series of working meetings and seven public hearings across the state, the task force assessed the current state of middle grade education, identified the legal and fiscal barriers schools face in attempting to implement the reforms described in *Turning Points*, and delineated goals and recommendations for restructuring middle grade schools. These recommendations served as the basis for a statewide policy on middle grade education adopted by the Texas Board of Education.

Over the next two years, the project will implement the recommendations contained in the task force's report through a network of schools and other institutions providing education and related services to young adolescents. Each site will serve as the center of a regional network of local schools and institutions serving young adolescents by providing professional development, communication, coordination of health and human services, and business partnership opportunities within the area. The Texas Education Agency will provide assistance to the statewide and regional networks. The agency also will conduct the Effective Middle School Project, a multifaceted assessment of the capacity of schools within the Texas Middle School Network, and other middle grade schools, to implement reforms and improve student performance.

Vermont

Vermont's middle grade project is a cornerstone and, in many ways, an exemplar of the kind of locally based reform being pursued in the state, which is recognized across the United States for its school reform efforts. In its first year, the project developed a mission statement and conceptual framework of goals and standards for middle grade education, which were widely distributed by the Vermont Middle Grades Task Force and were endorsed by the state board of education as the state's first official policy statements on education for young adolescents. In addition, challenge and minigrants were awarded to several schools to promote exemplary middle level practices.

The project's emphasis on policy development will continue over the next two years through the formation of policy action subcommittees of the Middle Grades Task Force. These subcommittees will monitor, make recommendations, and participate in the development of education and human service policies affecting young adolescents.

Also during the next two years, the project will select and support another 6 to 10 demonstration schools to implement change along the lines delineated in the mission statement and conceptual frameworks. The state department of education will form an interdepartmental technical assistance team to help the schools; and the schools, over time, will each become the hub of a network of middle grade schools and related institutions within their regions. In addition to the demonstration schools, the department will sponsor a Network of Transforming Middle Level Schools. Thirty schools in 1991-92 and 30 more in 1992-93 will implement *Turning Points* reforms on a more gradual basis.

Building on Vermont's vanguard effort to measure student performance in mathematics and writing using student portfolios, the project will design an authentic, multimethod assessment of middle grade students' competencies. This assessment will measure the extent to which students become intellectually reflective, caring, ethical, and healthy individuals as described in *Turning Points*.

For more information about any of these projects, as well as those of the other 12 network states, feel free to contact the state project directors. A listing of their names, addresses, and telephone numbers is found in Appendix D.

Appendix A

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MGSSPI Technical Assistance and Oversight Activities of CCSSO

Technical Assistance

CCSSO's technical assistance activities have included the following:

1. **Helping the Carnegie Corporation conduct a national inaugural workshop** to introduce state project staffs to one another and to nationally known experts in middle grade education and adolescent development. The three-day workshop, held in October 1990 at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Georgia, also provided an opportunity for project leaders to identify the major hurdles they faced, meet their CCSSO contacts, and describe the types of assistance that would be most helpful in meeting the goals of the state projects.

   Following the workshop, CCSSO staff prepared a detailed memorandum describing the technical assistance services that project directors could get from or through the Council.

2. **The conference series on policy development** focused on effective strategies for formulating and implementing the policies necessary to achieve middle grade school reform. Speakers included James Smith, deputy superintendent for curriculum and instructional leadership in the California State Department of Education; James Guthrie, professor of education at the University of California, Berkeley, and director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE); and Julia Koppich, associate director of PACE.

   The keynote address, delivered by Karen Pittman, vice president of the Academy for Educational Development, emphasized a new vision of "youth development" that emphasized youths' positive aspects, their developmental needs and abilities, and their potential contributions to society.

   All 27 grantees attended at least one of these three working conferences.

3. **The topical workshop series** concentrated on three specific issues. Teams from 26 states participated in at least one of the workshops, and several attended two.

   a. The first workshop, ``Integrating Services for Young Adolescents" suggested strategies for the interagency collaboration needed to integrate services for middle school students. Of the 27 grantees, 16 participated in this event.

   Pennsylvania's former secretary of education, Tom Gilhool, gave the keynote address. Mr. Gilhool stressed that America's economic well-being depended on how well we educate every child. He continued to emphasize that our society and public schools can no longer afford to fail a significant number of students. In general, Mr. Gilhool observed, our health and human service agencies operate in a manner that limits families' access to much needed services. He cautioned that the integration of services should not be an end in itself; rather, the goal is to provide quality services to those in need, in an accessible and efficient manner. Mr. Gilhool emphasized the importance of "friendliness" and "friendship" across professional boundaries as key to promoting interagency collaboration. He also encouraged state officials to use precedents set by federal and state law to support their efforts to develop integrated service initiatives for young adolescents.

   The workshop sessions were led by William Morrill, who was formerly assistant secretary for planning and evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and who is now president of Mathtech, Inc., and by Ed Tetelman, director of the Office of Legal and Regulatory Affairs, New Jersey Department of Human Services.

   Mr. Morill provided conference participants with an overview of what has occurred across the states with respect to building collaborative models for integrated services. He explained that the need for collaboration results from the failure of the current system to effectively serve children and families. He then outlined key components needed to "get organized."

   Mr. Tetelman, who was assisted by Robert Spence, assistant principal of Bridgeton High School in New Jersey, spoke of the New Jersey School Based Youth Services Program, which he and Spence helped develop. Both speakers provided conference participants with a step-by-step process to build a full-service model school. They characterized the model as "one-stop-shop," with three required elements. These elements are mental health services and family counseling, job training and employment services, and preventive and primary health services.

   b. The second topical working conference, "Middle Grade Teacher Education and Licensure," assisted grantees in promoting intrastate cooperation among the key people and organizations who collectively are responsible for middle grade teacher education and licensure. The six state teams attending included representatives from state education agencies, teacher education institutions, and state licensing bodies.

   Remarks from Carol Ann Dwyer, senior corporate development leader at the Educational Testing Service, opened the session. Ms. Dwyer asserted that new teacher assessments should be comprehensive and tied to important milestones in a teacher's career. Further, she noted that mathematics, science, and English should be integral components of any teacher education program; and emphasis must be placed on subject-matter knowledge and actual teacher performance. Ms. Dwyer concluded her remarks by identifying the essential characteristics of an effective teacher assessment.

Presenters included Hendrik Gideonse, professor of education and policy science at the University of Cincinnati; C. Kenneth McEwin, professor and coordinator of middle grades education at Appalachian State University; and Nicholas Hobar, assistant superintendent of instruction in the Maryland Department of Education. Mr. Gideonse focused his attention on the policy and politics of teacher education reform. Mr. McEwin discussed the nature of an ideal, middle level teacher preparation program. The last conference presentation was given by Mr. Hobar, who centered his remarks on the role of the state education agency in reforming teacher education and the licensing process.

c. The third topical working conference, "Middle Grade Curriculum and Student Assessment," presented an opportunity to learn about new curriculum reform initiatives, alternative assessments, and strategies to improve middle grade curriculum and student assessment practices. Individuals from 10 states attended.

Eric Cooper, vice president for inservice training and telecommunications in the Simon and Schuster Education Group, set the context for discussions by asserting that the end result of instruction should be improved comprehension and thinking achieved through applied learning opportunities that are both thematic and collaborative. He emphasized that what teachers do before, during, and after a lesson is important to ensure retention of what is taught and learned, and he recommended increased use of experiential learning. Mr. Cooper challenged state officials to find ways to empower school administrators and teachers as instructional leaders through appropriate training.

The next speaker, Philip Daro, executive director of the California Mathematics Project, engaged conference participants in a performance-based science assessment. He followed this exercise with a discussion of the personal, social, and cognitive development issues associated with young adolescents.

Mr. Daro's discussion was followed by Ramsay Selden, director of CCSSO's State Education Assessment Center. Mr. Selden focused on curriculum and assessment reform efforts and their implications for federal policy change at the state level. He later joined Mr. Daro in leading conference participants in an exercise in scoring student work. The ensuing discussion focused on an expanded role of the teacher in a comprehensive assessment process that includes the use of diagnostic tests or assessment instruments to measure student performance and achievement.

The topical conferences were uniformly rated as excellent by conference participants.

4. **A newsletter,** called *Turning Points: State Network News*, publishes news of project activities and accomplishments. The newsletter helps to network the various projects. It continues to act as a forum for posing questions, exchanging solutions, and calling attention to important research or other resources, such as sources of technical assistance.

CCSSO published the newsletter five times during the initial 15 months of the project. Issues were circulated to about 1,800 individuals and organizations, including all chief state school officers, governors' education aides, and major education associations.

5. **A four-volume resource guide** has been compiled and distributed to project staff in the 27 states. The guide describes a wide array of promising programs, approaches, and sources of assistance.

   Volume I, released at the Pine Mountain conference in October 1990, contains articles and other written materials on young adolescents, communities for learning, teaching in the middle grades, supportive partnerships, school restructuring, and examples of state policy revisions.

   Volume II, which was mailed in February 1991, concerns integrated services for young adolescents. Sections focus on comprehensive school health programs, health services, child welfare, delinquency, and models of service integration.

   A month later, Volume III appeared. This guide on middle grade teacher education is divided into segments on teacher education, continuing professional development, teacher licensure, and partnerships between schools and universities.

   Volume IV, issued in May 1991, presents data on middle grade curriculum and student assessment. The papers in this collection emphasize linkages: curriculum with assessment, curriculum with instruction, and instruction with assessment.

   Volumes II, III, and IV were developed to augment the topical workshops.

Oversight Activities

CCSSO's oversight activities have included the following:

1. **Contacts with states' project staff.** After the national workshop in October 1990, Council staff telephoned all 27 project directors. These initial contacts established working relationships, followed up on conversations at the workshop, described CCSSO's role in the project, offered assistance, and sought information about how each state was progressing.

   Numerous communications followed for a variety of purposes, such as assistance to grantees and facilitation of communication among them.

2. **State progress reports.** Council staff obtained written narrative and financial reports from each state, as well as a comprehensive final report summarizing the first 15 months of the project. The information was used as a basis for follow-up contacts with particular grantees, as necessary, and for reporting states' progress to the Carnegie Corporation.

3. **On-site performance reviews.** The Council played a leading role in planning, conducting, and reporting findings from on-site reviews. CCSSO staff developed a detailed protocol for conducting these reviews, participated in more than half of the 27 on-site visits, and drafted 13 of the reports to the Carnegie Corporation.

Appendix B

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MGSSPI State Products

Alaska

Alaska Middle Grades School Assessment, 1991. This survey was adapted from the Colorado MGSSPI survey, and the data collected were used to develop profiles on several schools throughout Alaska. For further information, contact Dr. Scott Fredrickson, University of Alaska Islands Campus, 1332 Seward Ave., Sitka, AK 99835 or call (907) 747-7718.

Alaska Staff Development Network Turning Points Coalition-Middle Level Resource Guide, 1991. This publication is designed to summarize essential research in middle level education that is applicable to Alaskan schools. It includes sections on the historical perspectives of middle schools, characteristics of middle grade students, and the roles of teachers and principals for implementing middle school reforms. For further information contact Bob Murphy, Ryan Middle School, 951 Airport Way, Fairbanks, AK 99701-6095 or call (907) 452-4751.

Alaska Turning Points Coalition Middle Level Institute Team Project Resource Guide, 1991. This publication contains several project descriptions produced by middle level school teams at the first statewide middle level institute. Projects focus on topics such as advisor/advisee, attendance, content areas, and communication and professional action plans. For further information, contact Fred Goerisch, U.S. Hanshaw Jr. High, 10121 Lake Otis Parkway, Anchorage, AK 99516 or call (907) 349-1516.

California

Caught in the Middle, 1987. This document presents a reformed agenda for grades 6-8 and is the result of one years' research conducted by the Middle Grades Task Force to learn what makes effective schooling at the middle grade level in California. The topics of curriculum, student development, learning environments, teaching, and partnerships are included. It also proposes an agenda based on the premise that optimal reform will be the result of collaboration in the form of "networks" established among groups of schools. For further information contact Thaddeus Dumas, Administrator, Office of Middle Grades Support Services, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall-P.O. Box 94472, Sacramento, CA 95814 or call (916) 322-1892.

Managing Middle Grade Reform, 1991. This document depicts the experiences of teachers, counselors, administrators, and students engaged in implementing middle grade reforms. Seventy-five key principles associated with managing middle grade education reforms are presented, with accompanying editorial commentaries. For further information, contact Thaddeus Dumas, Administrator, Office of Middle Grades Support Services, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall-P.O. Box 94472, Sacramento, CA 95814 or call (916) 322-1892.

Office of Middle Grade Support Services Vision Statement 1990-1995. This timely mission statement from the Office of Middle Grade Support Services examines visions, opportunities, and challenges for the future. Many components of the California Middle Grade Reform Model are also discussed. For further information, contact Thaddeus Dumas, Administrator, Office of Middle Grades Support Services, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall-P.O. Box 94472, Sacramento, CA 95814 or call (916) 322-1892.

Project INFORMS Video Tape Series, 1991-92. This five-part video series describes the experiences of professionals working within the state's regional networks of middle schools. The series, with accompanying *Facilitator Guides*, captures critical elements of the middle grade reform movement in the real world of schools. The first videotape documents the California Middle Grade Reform Model, as reflected through the experiences of 115 middle grade schools organized into 10 Regional Networks of Partnership Schools located throughout California. The second tape illustrates how Partnership Schools have approached the integration of curriculum through interdisciplinary teaming. The last three videos in the series are currently being developed and will be available in late 1992. For further information, contact Thaddeus Dumas, Administrator, Office of Middle Grades Support Services, California State Department of Education, 721 Capitol Mall-P.O. Box 94472, Sacramento, CA 95814 or call (916) 322-1892.

Colorado

Colorado Middle Level School Assessment Instrument. This assessment instrument was issued to all middle/junior high schools in the fall of 1990 and 1991 to determine the current and desired conditions for educating children in grades 5-8 in Colorado. The questions are based on *Turning Points* recommendations. For further information, contact Elaine

Andrus, MGSSPI Project Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203 or call (303) 866-6808.

Directory of Youth Service Learning Programs in the Metro Denver Area, 1991. This directory of youth service learning programs is compiled from five county metro areas in Denver. The guide also lists programs, descriptions, and contact persons. For further information, contact Elaine Andrus, MGSSPI Project Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203 or call (303) 866-6808.

Midpoints, 1991-92. This quarterly newsletter, published by the Colorado Association of Middle Level Education and the Colorado Carnegie Grant for Middle Level Education, contains articles and information promoting excellence in middle level education. For further information, contact Elaine Andrus, MGSSPI Project Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203 or call (303) 866-6808.

Teacher Evaluation as a Process for Implementing the Turning Points Recommendations, 1991. This instructor's manual addresses three questions pertaining to teacher performance, effectiveness, and skill level for middle level education. Also included is a teacher evaluation improvement system and a faculty profile (based on aggregated data). For further information, contact Elaine Andrus, MGSSPI Project Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203 or call (303) 866-6808.

Transescent Trails, 1991. This annual publication promotes excellence in middle level education by providing articles that focus on a wide range of issues concerning middle level students, educators, and administrators. For further information, contact Elaine Andrus, MGSSPI Project Coordinator, Colorado Department of Education, 201 East Colfax, Denver, CO 80203 or call (303) 866-6808.

Middle Level Interdisciplinary Units, 1991. To obtain information about middle level interdisciplinary teaching units developed by teachers, for teachers, contact the Colorado Middle Level Interdisciplinary Education Center at (303)351-2369.

Connecticut

Connecticut Middle Grade School Development Program, 1991. This guide combines the results of the Connecticut Middle Grade Survey and other data on student achievement/outcomes to foster future programs that will identify areas of need for 1991 and 1992. For further information, contact Richard Lappert, MGSSPI Project Director, Connecticut State Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457 or call (203) 638-4207.

Connecticut Middle Grades Survey, 1991. This survey was sent out to the administrators of all public middle grade schools in Connecticut for the purpose of assessing the status of middle grade education. The questions relate to success of students, teacher empowerment, health of students, family involvement, and community involvement with the school. For further information, contact Richard Lappert, MGSSPI Project Director, Connecticut State Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457 or call (203) 638-4207.

Right in the Middle, 1991. This report presents the recommendations for the continued development of middle grade education in Connecticut in accordance with the views expressed in *Turning Points*. These recommendations are divided into five sections which correspond to topics addressed by the five subcommittees of the task force. Topics include responses to the Carnegie challenge, task force activities, assessing and restructuring schools, professional development, and curriculum. For further information, contact Richard Lappert, MGSSPI Project Director, Connecticut State Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457 or call (203) 638-4207.

Delaware

Guidelines for Middle Level Education in Delaware: An Agenda for Success, 1991. This document addresses seven aspects of middle level education, which explain the provisions of Delaware's Middle Level Educational Policy, adopted by the state board of education in April 1991. Each part restates the policy component that addresses a section from *Turning Points*; and then a rationale is presented for each section followed by operational guidelines for use by schools. For further information, contact Clifton Hutton, MGSSPI Project Director, Delaware Department of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 1402 - Townsend Building, Dover, DE 19903 or call (302) 739-4647.

Florida

Florida Multi-Agency Middle School Network Brochure, 1991. This brochure describes and outlines the activities that are planned under the MGSSPI grant. The mission of this network is also discussed. Although purchase or gratuity copies of this brochure are unavailable, further information may be obtained from the Office of Middle Grades Education, Florida Department of Education, 401 Florida Education Center, 325 West Gains Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399 or call (904) 487-8770.

Florida Multi-Agency Middle School Program Directory, 1991. This directory is a compilation of programs that involve multiagency collaboration for young adolescents in grades 6-8. The programs are listed under four categories: multiagency programs, academic achievement, business and community partnerships, and student community services. Although purchase or gratuity copies of this directory are unavailable, further information may be obtained from the Office of Middle Grades Education, Florida Department of Education, 401 Florida Education Center, 325 West Gains Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399 or call (904) 487-8770.

Illinois

Illinois Middle Level School Assessment: A Look at the State-of-the-Art in Middle Grades Practices, 1991. This survey was conducted to assess the state-of-the-art among Illinois schools providing instruction to students in grades 5-8. The survey obtained information concerning middle level school practices in relation to *Turning Points* recommendations. Seventy-five percent of the middle schools surveyed responded. Findings and conclusions are also discussed. For further information, contact Sheryl Poggi, MGSSPI Project Director, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 or call (217) 524-4832.

Right in the Middle, 1991. This document plans for the transformation of education for young adolescents in Illinois. It explains the place, purpose, and potential of middle level education in the future. The seven recommendations adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education in June 1991 are also described. For further information, contact Sheryl Poggi, MGSSPI Project Director, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 or call (217) 524-4832.

Right in the Middle Video. This video presentation highlights three schools that use a variety of strategies to implement effective middle grades practices. Despite the schools' organizational, cultural, and socioeconomic differences, they all share a common desire to organize and deliver curriculum and instruction based on the developmental needs of early adolescents. For further information, contact Sheryl Poggi, MGSSPI Project Director, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 or call (217) 524-4832.

Indiana

Betwixt and Between, 1992. This comprehensive monograph reports on the recommendation of Indiana's Middle Level Task Force on restructuring education for middle level students. The report provides a summary of the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of young adolescents and their special needs. Recommendations from *Turning Points* are discussed, and a middle level bibliography is included. For further information, contact Betty Johnson, Director, Office of School Assistance, Room 229, State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204 or call (317) 232-9141.

Kentucky

Middle Morphosis: Kentucky's Plan for Young Adolescents, 1991. This document reports on Kentucky's plan to improve the education of young adolescents. The report highlights the connections with the Kentucky Education Reform Act and suggests strategies to more closely align programs with *Turning Points* recommendations. For further information, contact Kay Vincent, MGSSPI Project Director, Kentucky Department of

Education, 1809 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40701 or call (502) 564-2106.

Statewide Surveys, 1991. These surveys were developed to ascertain the status and needs of middle grades programs. Forms were sent to middle grade administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other service-delivery agencies. For further information, contact Kay Vincent, MGSSPI Project Director, Kentucky Department of Education, 1809 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601 or call (502) 564-2106.

Maryland

Maryland Middle Learning Years Education Self-Assessment Instrument, 1990. This assessment instrument is based primarily on the 37 recommendations of the Middle Learning Years Task Force Report. Information from this assessment tool will reveal the status of curriculum, instruction, outcomes, culture, administrative practices, and services at any given school. Two additional sections have been added that focus on student performance and effective environments in the schools. For further information, contact Antionette Favazza, MGSSPI Project Director, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201 or call (410) 333-2357.

Maryland Middle Learning Years Education School Improvement Planning Guide, 1990. This guide has been developed to provide a framework for the schools' assessment and planning efforts. It incorporates major steps that schools would have to undertake to bring about change. Topics include preparation, data collection, analysis of data, and creating an action plan. For further information, contact Antionette Favazza, MGSSPI Project Director, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201 or call (410) 333-2357.

Task Force Report—What Matters in the Middle Grades: Recommendations for Maryland Middle Grades Education, 1987. This report contains 37 recommendations made by the middle level task force with rationales and research supporting each suggestion. The philosophy, programs, and methodologies that are applied to Maryland's middle level education program are also examined in this document. For further information, contact Antionette Favazza, MGSSPI Project Director, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201 or call (410) 333-2357.

Massachusetts

Developing Partnerships—Planning Programs: A Mid-Year Survey of Participating Schools and Colleges, 1991. This survey summarizes the experiences of the six participating schools and colleges that have developed partnerships for building a school restructuring and clinical-site teacher preparation plan. Issues, problems, and future activities are discussed in each narrative. For further information, contact Susan Zelman, MGSSPI Project Director, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1385 Hancock Street, Qunicy, MA 02169-5183 at (617) 770-7505.

Survey On Middle Grade Organization and Practice, 1991. This survey is a joint effort by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators Association and the New England League of Middle Schools to obtain information to use as a guide to professional development opportunities for middle schools and to prepare a middle grades report that will increase attention to the needs of middle school students. For further information, contact Susan Zelman, MGSSPI Project Director, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1385 Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183 or call (617) 770-7505.

Task Force Reports: First Six Months & Second Six Months, 1991. Both of these reports focus on Massachusetts' MGSSPI activities for year one. *The First Six Months* reports on the processes that local middle schools and colleges used to cement their collaborative connections. *The Second Six Months* reports on details of the start-up phase activities. For further information, contact Susan Zelman, MGSSPI Project Director, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1385 Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183 or call (617) 770-7505.

The Massachusetts Middle Grade Regional Alliance Network—Improving the Middle Grades Through Collaborative Professional Development, 1991. This publication describes the impetus for and summarizes the Massachusetts Regional Alliance Network. The Network provides collaborative professional development opportunities to middle grade educators and others with the goal of improving middle level education for all students. For further information, contact Susan Zelman, MGSSPI Project Director, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1385 Quincy, Massachusetts, 02169-5183 or call (617) 770-7505.

New Mexico

Leading the Way, 1991. This 12-minute video provides an introduction to the concepts and philosophy of the middle level reform movement in New Mexico. Interviews with middle level students, teachers, and administrators were conducted throughout the state to create this video. For further information, contact Richard LaPan, MGSSPI Project Co-Director, New Mexico Department of Education, State Education Building, Santa Fe, NM 87501 or call (505) 827-6673.

Moving Into Action: Middle Level Education in New Mexico, 1991. This document is a report to the State Board of Education that presents findings and recommendations for middle level educational reform in New Mexico schools. Included are definitions of desirable middle level programs, models for education communities, and an action plan for effective change in New Mexico's middle schools. For further information, contact Richard LaPan, MGSSPI Project Co-Director, New Mexico

Department of Education, State Education Building, Santa Fe, NM 87501 or call (505) 827-6673.

New York

Promising Programs and Practices in Middle Level Education, 1990. This reference and resource guide is for practitioners who are interested in implementing the *Regents Policy Statement on Middle Level Education*. School names, addresses, and a list of contact people are provided, along with information on the implementation of the Regents Policy Statement. For further information, contact David Payton, MGSSPI Project Director, New York State Education Department, Room 971 EBA, Albany, NY 12234 or call (518) 474-8224.

Regents Policy Statement on Middle Level Education and Schools with Middle Level Grades, 1989. This policy statement recommends policy changes for middle level education practices and outcomes. The document describes a philosophy and a mission while advocating organizational, instructional, and training methods to improve the education of middle grade students. For further information, contact David Payton, MGSSPI Project Director, New York State Education Department, Room 971 EBA, Albany, NY 12234 or call (518) 474-8224.

Survey of 8th Grade Students in Schools with Middle Level Grades. This survey is designed to ascertain how eighth grade students across the state feel about their schools. For further information, contact David Payton, MGSSPI Project Director, New York State Education Department, Room 971 EBA, Albany, NY 12234 or call (518) 474-8224.

Trainer's Manual Series: Creating Interdisciplinary Instructional Programs, Developing Teacher Teams, Instituting Advisor-Advisee Programs, 1991. These trainer's manuals were developed for workshop seminars for teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. Each manual contains directions and materials for a complete and successful training program. For further information, contact David Payton, MGSSPI Project Director, New York State Education Department, Room 971 EBA, Albany, NY 12234 or call (518) 474-8224.

North Carolina

Last Best Chance, 1990. This task force report makes recommendations to improve middle level education for North Carolina in response to *Turning Points*. Key topics are addressed, such as school organization, instruction, and health concerns. For further information, contact Virginia Myers, Instructional Specialist, South East Technical Assistance Center, 2013 Lejeune Blvd., Jacksonville, NC 28546 or call (919) 577-8920.

North Dakota

Bridges for Young Adolescents—Governor's Task Force on Early Adolescence, 1992. This report makes recommendations for building stronger bridges for families, school boards, and educators who work with adolescents in North Dakota. For further information, contact Lowell Thompson, MGSSPI Project Director, P.O. Box 8158, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or call (701) 777-2863.

BRIDGES Workshop Evaluation 1991-1992. This document is an informative evaluation of the BRIDGES' program workshops. Statistics, recommendations, and in-depth descriptions are provided for detailed insight into this program. For further information, contact Lowell Thompson, MGSSPI Project Director, P.O. Box 8158, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or call (701) 777-2863.

Middle Level Education-Newsletter of the Association of Middle Level Education of North Dakota and the BRIDGES Project, 1991. This newsletter reports on activities and issues in middle grade education. For further information, contact Lowell Thompson, MGSSPI Project Director, P.O. Box 8158, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or call (701) 777-2863.

Policy Recommendations Working Papers, 1991. This document, commissioned by the Governor's Task Force on Early Adolescence, contains a selection of papers that recommended policy changes in the areas of finance, at-risk youth, educational personnel, community support, and curriculum. For more information, contact Lowell Thompson, MGSSPI Director, P.O. Box 8158, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or call (701) 777-2863.

Study Group Curriculum and Community Task Force Reports, 1991. This document reports on the activities and assignments of study groups in 20 communities statewide. These groups consist of teachers, counselors, school board members, and parents who came together to study middle level education and returned to their communities to assess existing programs and practices. For more information, contact Lowell Thompson, MGSSPI Director, P.O. Box 8158, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202 or call (701) 777-2863.

Rhode Island

From the Margins to the Middle: A Call for Reform, 1991. This document advocates a comprehensive and unified approach to middle level education through policy reform. Recommendations include higher academic standards, creating communities for success, providing youth services, elimination of tracking, teacher empowerment, and reengaging families with schools. For further information, contact Ken Fish, MGSSPI Project Director, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 22 Hayes Street, Providence, RI 02908 or call (401) 277-2734.

Rhode Island Department of Education—News Briefs. This series of newsletters profile state and local activities in relation to middle level education. Article topics range from local school restructuring to state policy changes. For further information, contact Ken Fish, MGSSPI Project Director, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 22 Hayes Street, Providence, RI 02908 or call (401) 277-2734.

South Carolina

School Health Leadership Conference Report, 1991. This report is the result of a Leadership Conference held in October 1990; it is a collaborative assessment of school health-related needs. Topics include conference methods and findings and future directions for addressing health issues in South Carolina. For further information, contact A. Baron Holmes, MGSSPI Project Director, South Carolina Budget and Control Board, P.O. Box 12444, Columbia, SC 29211 or call (803) 734-2291.

Turning Points Self Assessment of 40 Middle School Teams, 1991. This assessment report provides statistical information about current practices in middle level reform in South Carolina. Current practices were evaluated in conjunction with *Turning Points* recommendations, and plans for future improvement are discussed. For further information, contact A. Baron Holmes, MGSSPI Project Director, South Carolina Budget and Control Board, P.O. Box 12444, Columbia, SC 29211 or call (803) 734-2291.

Texas

A Source Book of Notable Texas Middle Grade Programs, 1991. This publication provides descriptions and contact information for programs that embody restructuring strategies from *Spotlight in the Middle* and *Turning Points*. Descriptions of school programs are included from educators statewide. For further information, contact Melody Johnson, MGSSPI Project Director, Division of Middle School Education, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701 or call (512) 463-9223.

Network Spotlight Newsletter, 1991-92. This publication of the Texas Middle School Network provides up-to-date information on Texas middle schools, activities, and conferences statewide. For further information, contact Melody Johnson, MGSSPI Project Director, Division of Middle School Education, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701 or call (512) 463-9223.

Policy Statement on Middle Grade Education and Middle Grade Schools, 1991. This policy statement provides a framework for middle level education; it was passed unanimously by the state board of education in 1991. It describes the philosophy that middle grade education should serve the purposes of academic development and personal/social growth for middle grade students. For further information contact Melody

Johnson, MGSSPI Project Director, Policy, Division of Middle School Education, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701 or call (512) 463-9223.

Spotlight on the Middle: Report of the Texas Task Force on Middle School Education with Executive Summary, 1991. This report describes the status of middle level education in Texas and outlines strategies for restructuring middle schools for the state legislature, state board of education, and the Texas Education Agency. This policy tool makes strong recommendations to develop and implement research-based programs without additional state mandates. The report also focuses on identifying laws and rules that impede implementation of restructuring middle grade education programs. For further information, contact Melody Johnson, MGSSPI Project Director, Division of Middle School Education, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701 or call (512) 463-9223.

Utah

Middle Level Education in Utah: Perceived Merit and Level of Implementation of Middle School Concepts in Utah's Middle Grade Schools (Executive Summary), 1991. This report, the result of a study evaluating middle level education in Utah, includes four major sections. The first section provides a summary of evaluation methods, the second focuses on methodologies, the third explains the outcomes and results, and the fourth is an interpretation of the outcomes. For further information, contact Joyce Hansen, MGSSPI Project Director, State Office of Education, 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84111 or call (801) 538-7741.

Vermont

One T A to Grow, Please, 1990. This publication describes the Vermont Teacher Advisory Model developed for middle grade students. Program components are discussed in detail and include the goals, problems, and roles of teacher advisory models. For further information, contact Carol Spencer, Shelburne Middle School, Shelburne, VT 05482.

The Middle Matters: Transforming Education for Vermont's Young Adolescents, 1991. This document provides the direction for the development of middle grades programs in all Vermont schools. A mission statement describes the purpose of young adolescent education. The report also expands on several conceptual frameworks and details concrete definitions and criteria for the development of middle level programs. Recommendations and self-assessment materials are included. For further information, contact Judy Carr, MGSSPI Project Director, Trinity College, 208 Colchester Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401 or call (802) 658-0337.

Virginia

Framework for Education in the Middle School Grades in Virginia, 1991. This document describes desirable educational practices for Virginia students in grades 6-8. The report makes 22 recommendations that can be implemented to enhance middle level education. For further information, contact Helen Stiff, Division Chief, Preadolescent Education, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 6-Q, Richmond, VA 23216-2060 or call (804) 225-2055.

Restructuring Education in the Middle School Grades, 1990. This document, the result of a Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education, makes recommendations for all aspects of restructuring in middle grade schools. Topics include the restructuring process at individual schools, the role of the department of education, and the development of the restructuring process. For further information, contact Helen Stiff, Division Chief, Preadolescent Education, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 6-Q, Richmond, VA 23216-2060 or call (804) 225-2055.

Beyond Turning Points to Decision Points, 1990. This document profiles a new vision for middle level programs for Virginia. Curriculum, instruction, student/teacher relationships, community structure, and barriers to reform are all addressed in this visionary statement. For further information, contact Helen Stiff, Division Chief, Preadolescent Education, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 6-Q, Richmond, VA 23216-2060 or call (804) 225-2055.

Appendix C

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MGSSPI Projects' Goals and Objectives by State

Alaska

Goal

Train Alaskan educators to restructure schools to better address the needs of young adolescent students.

Objective

Provide local, regional, and statewide training, along with technical assistance, through the existing Alaska Staff Development Network.

Arkansas

Goal

Build a statewide commitment to the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools.

Objectives

- Create statewide awareness of the developmental needs of early adolescents, placing emphasis on disadvantaged youth.
- Develop local capacity to implement effective middle grade curriculum and organization in 5 to 10 diverse types of schools, which will then serve as models and resources for other schools.
- Design a plan to provide the resources and strategies needed to stimulate and support communities in their efforts to meet the needs of 10- to 15-year-old Arkansas youths.

Colorado

Goal

Modify state policies.

Objectives

- Introduce legislation to facilitate the middle school movement.
- Modify state accreditation policies to be consistent with the recommendations in *Turning Points*.
- Increase the number of teachers holding middle-level certification.
- Establish a task force to influence state policies.

Goal

Strengthen multi-agency collaboration, and focus it on supporting the middle school concept.

Objectives

- Each of the participating state-level organizations will implement at least one collaborative project to support the *Turning Points* recommendations.
- There will be a measurable increase in local interagency collaborative efforts.

Goal

Enhance schools' and districts' capacities to initiate and sustain middle grade reforms.

Objectives

- Design and conduct an assessment to determine the extent to which *Turning Points* recommendations are being implemented.
- Enhance local inservice programs.
- Create a network of innovative schools.
- Organize a bank of interdisciplinary instructional units.
- Encourage linkage between the local implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations with the achievement of state goals.
- Develop a set of criteria and a process that relates the evaluation of teachers' effectiveness to the *Turning Points* recommendations.
- Provide technical assistance to support implementation efforts.
- Expand and strengthen programs for special education and handicapped students.
- Foster community involvement in school-community collaborative activities.
- Improve strategies to recruit new middle school teachers.
- Increase the number of teacher training institutions that offer middle school endorsement programs from one to three.

Goal

Improve the achievement, behavior, and attitudes of disadvantaged middle-level students.

Objectives

- Develop and pilot a process to collect information about symptoms of alienation among disadvantaged pupils.
- Undertake a project to identify promising interventions for improving the attitudes, behavior, and achievement of disadvantaged students.
- Improve services to handicapped youth.
- Encourage middle school educators to adopt promising practices related to improving education for the handicapped.

California

Goal

Produce a series of videotapes that disseminate the work of 10 regional networks of 115 middle-level schools that are implementing the California Middle Grade Reform Model.

Objectives

- Begin production of a five-part videotape documentary series that uses the school-based experiences of schools in 10 regional networks to communicate the purposes, programs, and operational strategies of the California Middle Grade Reform Model.
- Throughout the documentary series, emphasize the reform goals and objectives as defined in two documents: *Turning Points* and *Caught in the Middle: Educational Reform for Young Adolescents in California Public Schools* (published by the California Department of Education).
- Complete the first three videotapes, along with printed guides to be used by trained facilitators, who mediate the presentation of the tapes.
- Determine the conceptual content of the fourth and fifth videotapes, which begin production in 1992.

Connecticut

Purposes

- Establish a task force including members from the areas of education, health services, and social services. The task force will (1) determine the assistance that middle school educators need to implement the recommendations in *Turning Points*, (2) analyze the usefulness of resources that are already available in the state, and then (3) make recommendations on statewide efforts to improve middle grade education, including the necessary addition of resources.
- Link schools and teachers who want to improve with their counterparts in other schools.
- Develop and implement a pilot Middle Grade School Development Program through existing state-sponsored professional development

mechanisms. One component of the program is a survey instrument that would be administered in several volunteer schools as part of a school self-assessment process. Another component, to be built into the self-assessment process, is use of middle school performance data from the Strategic School Profile, a system concurrently being developed by the Department of Education.

Delaware

Goal

Put in place the regulations and guidelines needed to assist local districts in planning and implementing middle-level school reform.

Objectives

- Provide the resources and technical assistance that local school districts need to prepare a plan for implementing middle-level education.
- Establish specific processes and procedures for linking middle-level schools with state and community-based agencies that provide health and social services.
- Review certification requirements for middle-level educators and recommend specific changes that reflect the special needs of middle-level students.

Florida

Goal

Expand the Florida Middle School Network, increasing interagency involvement with middle schools.

Objectives

- Establish an advisory council of educators, policymakers, and professionals from health and social services.
- The state education agency (SEA) will work with subcommittees of the advisory council to produce (1) printed information on interagency services to youth, (2) a one-hour, professionally produced teleconference on *Turning Points: Florida's New Way*, and (3) five regional one-day workshops on multiagency programs.

Georgia

Goal

Georgia's Task Force on Middle Grade School State Policy Initiative will conduct a series of regional dialogue meetings that will improve the coordination of services to youth by establishing a network of youth service providers, parents, educators, students, and community representatives.

Illinois

Goal

Prepare a report that compares middle-level education in Illinois to that described in *Turning Points*.

Objective

Develop and conduct a survey asking middle grade school administrators about school practices vis-a-vis the eight *Turning Points* recommendations.

Goal

Raise awareness through focus groups, written communication, and presentations on the unique needs of middle-level youth and the goals of the grant project.

Objectives

- Plan, conduct, and summarize eight focus-group sessions in four regional locations for diverse groups (including superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, legislators, community and business leaders, youth-serving professionals, college deans and professors, and association members) to discuss two questions: What are the needs of early adolescents? and What should schools, families, and communities do to meet those needs?
- Write articles for state association newsletters and journals.
- Make presentations about the project at professional meetings.

Goal

Develop an Illinois plan to address early adolescent needs through educational reforms.

Objective

The project task force will (1) synthesize all information from the eight focus group meetings, the survey, and pertinent readings and (2) present their report to an advisory board and the Illinois Board of Education.

Goal

Incorporate the principles in *Turning Points* into other state restructuring and school improvement initiatives.

Objective

Coordinate efforts with the Illinois Alliance of Essential Schools, Chapter 1 services, the Urban Education Partnership Grants Project, and site-based reform efforts in Chicago, Sparta, Elmwood, and Alton.

Indiana

Goal

The Indiana Middle-level Task Force will link organizations and ideas in the state so that substantial and powerful changes in the education of adolescents can be assured.

Objectives

- Study *Turning Points* recommendations.

- Identify and analyze the extent of implementation of *Turning Points* recommendations in Indiana middle-level schools.
- Assess barriers, both perceived and real, to implementing the *Turning Points* recommendations.
- Review state policies on middle-level school curriculum, subject time, textbook selection, teacher empowerment, and teacher licensure.
- Study how community resources address the physical and mental health of adolescents and how such services are provided, duplicated, and interfaced.
- Visit sites with well-defined state policies.
- Attend meetings to gather information.
- Build a collaborative network of diverse groups addressing middle-level concerns.
- Devise a collaborative model to assist school districts to implement *Turning Points* recommendations at the local level.

Kentucky

Objectives

- Increase state awareness of *Turning Points* recommendations.
- Communicate and collaborate with agencies providing services to early adolescents.
- Determine the current status of middle grade services.
- Ascertain the public's priorities for middle grade education.
- Develop Kentucky's plan for early adolescents.

Activities

- Task force meets, forms, and expands its steering committee.
- Steering committee meets to develop the survey instruments.
- Interagency conference explains *Turning Points* recommendations, and links them to Kentucky's reform initiatives.
- Surveys are sent to and returned from administrators, teachers, parents, and students in schools; health, mental health, and social service agencies; universities and colleges; officers of the court; and businesses.
- Steering committee develops a slide presentation on *Turning Points* and presents it at 15 regional meetings. Participants then discuss the needs of early adolescents, identify priorities; and suggest ways that schools, communities, and families can meet the needs.
- Steering committee begins development of Kentucky's blueprint, which contains synopses of *Turning Points* recommendations, defines the link to the Kentucky Education Reform Act, analyzes the state's current middle school performance, and suggests strategies to align middle grade practices with *Turning Points* recommendations.
- The task force meets to respond to the initial draft of Kentucky's Plan for Young Adolescents.

- Disseminated *Middle Morphosis*, 1991 publication, to superintendents, schools, family and youth service centers, universities and colleges, school boards, and the public.

Louisiana

Goal

Raise the awareness of knowledge regarding middle grade concepts, and provide a support system for schools as they embark on the process of change.

Outcomes

- Established a middle school task force to provide leadership in effecting lasting policy changes for the middle grades and, working with the state of Mississippi, to foster comprehensive health care in middle schools.
- Established a Bureau of Middle Schools, a formal network. The network is to develop model syllabi for courses required for middle grade certification, outline field experiences for prospective middle grade teachers, encourage the full implementation of National Middle School Association Guidelines, and act as a clearinghouse for interaction among professionals in the SEA, universities, and middle grade schools.
- Implemented a series of regional training programs to help administrators and teachers implement the recommendations prescribed in *Turning Points for Louisiana*.
- Established a network of middle schools that exchange information through the Middle School Association and its newsletter.
- Provided technical assistance to support middle school reforms.
- Published a pamphlet and newsletter on middle-level education.
- Held a three-day statewide conference for a diverse group of educators on curriculum and instruction, school improvement, and interagency collaboration with communities.

Maryland

Initial Goal

Develop and document a process for restructuring to improve education for early adolescents.

Objectives

- In four restructuring middle schools in different districts, carry out a multilevel ownership process to enable central office personnel, building administrators, and teacher to gain a stakeholder's commitment to the project.
- Establish new structures to facilitate project operations and communications: school improvement planning teams in each school; technical assistance teams from the state education agency (SEA) that provide resources and technical assistance to schools; an SEA action team composed of all technical assistance teams plus other SEA

resource personnel, and a school improvement council, a high-level interagency policy group.

- Form new partnerships between the four demonstration schools and multiagency services in each of the surrounding communities.

Subsequent Goals (For Project's Final Two Years)

- At state, local, and school levels, institute structures, policies, and planning procedures that improve the performance of early adolescents and their schools.
- Implement comprehensive service-delivery models for at-risk early adolescents and their families.
- Collaboratively develop and implement programs that are appropriate to early adolescents, using information-management systems (including technology) for curriculum, instruction, and school improvement.
- Provide interventions for at-risk students that improve their achievement and involvement.
- Develop and implement professional-development process models that are appropriate for middle grades, school-based change.

Massachusetts

Goal

Use project funds as a catalyst and leverage for long-term, systemic change linking urban middle grade restructuring with the reform of teacher preparation.

Objectives

- Establish a statewide advisory committee to assess the status of middle grade education and recommend reforms; assist in developing a statewide network of schools that work jointly on professional development for educators, including those in disadvantaged communities; advise in the development of school-college partnerships; and recommend to the state board of education how best to integrate middle grade reform with SEA activities.
- Create five partnerships between middle grade schools and colleges or universities to promote middle grade reforms according the recommendations in *Turning Points* and to develop school-based, middle grade certification programs.
- Support school-university partnerships as they develop school-site, middle grade teacher preparation programs.
- Establish and implement a statewide middle school network to promote middle grade restructuring, disseminate promising practices, and sponsor professional development opportunities for other disadvantaged communities.
- Encourage urban middle school educators to join existing professional associations.

Mississippi

Goal

Use the social reconnaissance process to spark reform for middle grade school students in five of the state's most socioeconomically distressed counties.

Objectives

- The governor appoints a state community development coalition of elected officials, religious leaders, and public and private sector providers, at both state and local levels.
- Local coalitions are formed, including committees to concentrate on housing, human services, health, education, and economic development. Education committees work with all other committees, but predominantly with the health and human services committees. Education committees address a variety of goals and problems, but particularly focus on at-risk students, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse.
- Local coalitions plan solutions to problems and submit proposals for possible funding.

New Jersey

Goals

- Strengthen middle grade programs in urban districts.
- Improve health and other social services to children and their families by expanding service delivery at schools and strengthening interagency coordination.

Objectives

- Improve communication between state agencies and the nascent Middle School Association.
- To encourage educators to implement the recommendations in Turning Points, and to improve technical assistance and the dissemination of information from the department of education and other state agencies.
- Implement health and social service integration in the middle grades by implementing a pilot program demonstrating concrete examples of collaboration between schools and social service agencies.

New Mexico

Goal

The restructuring of middle-level school organization and/or curriculum and instruction to enhance the quality of teacher-student and student-student relationships.

Objectives

- Enable the Middle-Level Education Advisory Committee (formerly a task force) to define middle-level education for the state, including specific recommendations for curriculum and instruction, organizational structures, and other accommodations that recognize the unique stage of development of the middle-level student.

- Enable school teams to train staffs in other school districts in the essential features of the middle-level school that create a climate for personal growth and intellectual development.
- Produce a videotape cassette of unique features of the selected schools to be used and exchanged with districts/schools wishing to promote changes within their own organizations.
- Enable initial planning to begin for a resource/technical center that would eventually provide schools statewide with personal and computer access to resources (people, schools, and research) about many aspects of successful middle-level schools.

Goal

Establishing systems of interagency collaboration to serve the selected schools and communities.

Objectives

- Enable staffs at schools, and social-service, and health-related agencies to meet and coordinate services to student.
- Develop further connections between the above agencies and the people who work in them for students.

New York

Activities

- Develop professional training and staff development programs that provide middle-level educators with the knowledge, skills, and practical support (1) to access health, social, and other human services programs that address the needs of early adolescents and (2) to institute (a) ``houses" or schools-within-schools, (b) interdisciplinary teacher teams, (c) advisor-advisee programs, (d) flexible scheduling, and (e) heterogeneous grouping.
- Develop a preliminary listing of the desired student outcomes and authentic assessments for middle-level education.
- Develop a professional training and staff development program that provides middle-level educators with the knowledge, skills, and practical support to develop and use interdisciplinary instructional programs.
- Develop a comprehensive list of health, fitness, and human service and program models for emerging adolescents that are currently available from various state agencies or implemented in other states.
- Once the list is complete, conduct statewide awareness, assessment, and information-collection efforts to disseminate information on the availability and scope of these services and program models, to assess their present effectiveness and relevance to future middle-level education policy, and to determine how young adolescents' health and fitness can be further enhanced.

- Identify existing services and programs where local schools and community-based organizations work to foster and enhance either school-family or school-community connections.
- Once the preceding item is accomplished, conduct statewide awareness, assessment, and information-collection efforts to disseminate information on the availability and scope of these services and program models, to assess their present effectiveness and relevance to future middle-level education policy, and to determine how school-family or school-community connections can be further enhanced.
- Form a state task force (1) to undertake a comprehensive review of middle-level education and related youth policies, programs, and services and (2) to develop a state-level, multiagency plan for helping middle-level students—especially those who are disadvantaged—reach their full potential.
- Form an interagency working group to serve as staff to the state task force and as contact persons in the state agencies represented on the task force.
- Conduct a multiyear statewide research study on middle-level education (1) to assess the degree to which middle-level schools actually operate in accordance with the recommendations in *Turning Points* and the *Regents Policy Statement on Middle-Level Schools and Schools with Middle-Level Grades* and (2) to provide trend data over several years.

North Carolina

Objectives

- Plan and conduct a major public information effort to raise awareness at state, regional, and local levels about the needs of 10- to 14-year-olds.
- Through two regional centers with middle-level consultants, create planning committees to study *Last Best Chance* (the state's task force report), hear from experts on young adolescents, examine the roles of various agencies serving youth, and develop action plans.
- Develop regional plans for collaborative projects.
- Establish a state strategic-planning committee to begin cross-agency efforts and multiagency problem solving.

North Dakota

Goals

- Establish a statewide middle-level task force to recommend broadly based strategy on behalf of young adolescents.
- Establish middle-level study groups in 15 to 18 communities in three size categories; include communities whose schools serve above-average numbers of at-risk students.
- With the North Dakota Teacher Center Network and the teacher education programs at several North Dakota universities, coordinate

a series of workshops for educators at 10 sites; the workshops will concern the characteristics of young adolescents and schools that serve them successfully.

Rhode Island

Goals

- Assist schools in exploring and implementing the eight recommendations in *Turning Points*.
- Modify state and local policy and practice in support of the recommendations.

Objectives

- Create a statewide network, the Rhode Island Middle-level Educators (RIMLE).
- Create three demonstration and training sites.
- Provide coordination among schools and liaison with state-level decision makers, especially to identify impeding policies and to recommend changes.
- Develop support materials (newsletters) and provide technical assistance (help with long-range planning documents) in support of the *Turning Points* recommendations.

South Carolina

Goals

- Develop policy that reflects a basic consensus among all stakeholders involved with early adolescents and middle schools.
- Conduct in-depth assessments of current state practices as compared with the *Turning Points* recommendations.
- Network middle schools to review and implement *Turning Points* recommendations.
- Expand partnership collaboration, integrating middle school programs with those of health, community, business, parent, and human services organizations.

Texas

Goal

Effect change through the work of the Task Force on Middle School Education.

Objectives

- Determine the current status of middle school education in Texas.
- Delineate goals for restructuring middle school education.

Utah

Goals

- Raise the awareness of policymakers, educators, and parents in Utah about the special needs of young adolescents.
- Determine middle-level schools' current ability to meet those needs.
- Develop practical strategies and solutions to problems that may be found.

(First Year) Objectives

- Form a Utah Middle School Task Force to review a status report on the state's middle-level schools, form working subcommittees to address the inadequacies of state and local policies governing middle schools, and propose effective strategies to correct existing policy inadequacies.
- Create a network including the Utah State Office of Education, district middle-level education coordinators, local school board members, district and school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The network will eventually introduce *Turning Points* objectives to concerned individuals around the state and support individual teachers, principals, schools, and school districts as they seek to improve the quality of middle-level education.
- Among those districts that have not substantially adopted the methods proposed by the Carnegie initiative, create the desire and capacity to do so.
- In districts that have begun to implement middle-level education principles, encourage fuller adoption of the middle-level concept, perhaps by means of local middle school task forces.

Virginia

Goal

Support the existing Virginia Middle School Restructuring Initiative, a multifaceted plan that includes all state-sponsored efforts to reform middle grade education.

Objectives

- Conduct a multistate, invitational workshop to design an interdisciplinary curriculum guide for middle-level schools.
- Form the Virginia Advisory Committee on Middle Grades Education to advise on the education of early adolescents; assess and review the status of middle-level education; and recommend appropriate expansions, adjustments, and improvements.

Vermont

Goal

Define, develop, and disseminate information about middle grade education in Vermont.

Objectives

- The Middle Grades Task Force pursues **definition** by (1) producing a mission statement to provide direction for all middle-level efforts; (2) developing a conceptual framework with concrete criteria and examples to address middle-level organization, curriculum, student and program assessment, developmentally appropriate pedagogy, home-school collaboration, and the coordination of education, health, and social services for early adolescents; and (3) developing specific middle-level standards, which have come to focus on Vermont's Middle Grades Endorsement.
- Innovative **development** is provided through challenge grants for schools that propose innovations and minigrants to teams of two or more educators, parents, and/or human services personnel who design innovative projects according to specified criteria.
- A project director, working with the Vermont Association of Middle-level Educators, the Vermont Department of Education, the Vermont Agency of Human Services, and other organizations, achieve dissemination by (1) hosting six regional miniconferences, (2) compiling a network/resource catalog and a directory of persons involved in middle-level education, (3) distributing resource bulletins to everyone listed in the directory, and (4) conducting a professional development consortium to address middle grade professional development issues, expand staff development offerings, and develop a plan for the establishment of a Resource Center for Early Adolescence.

Washington

Original Goals

- Improve the preparation of middle grade teachers in four professional development schools by providing support for teacher time to initiate restructuring efforts.
- Conduct a statewide invitational conference for middle grade teachers, administrators, and parents to raise their awareness and inform them about issues and practices like the integrative curriculum, interagency linkages, parent involvement, and service learning.

Added Goals

- Cosponsor a meeting to help change certification practices, which formerly did not address middle grade teachers.
- Forge a coalition to influence future middle grade policies and practices by inviting various stakeholders in middle grade education to join the Professional Education Advisory Committee (PEAC).

Source: These aims are identified in each state's 1991 Final Report.

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